

Animals & Men

The Journal of the Centre for Fortean Zoology



Is THIS the face of the British “Wolverine”?

Killer Bees; A New species of Beaked Whale?

The British “Wildcat” video

Issue 17

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"In her abnormalities, nature reveals her
 secrets"
 (Goethe)

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ANIMALS & MEN

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THE GREAT DAYS OF ZOOLOGY ARE NOT DONE

Dear Friends,

With this issue it is all change at The Centre for Fortean Zoology. As many of you will, no doubt have noticed we have a new layout and we are, at last, in colour. Finally we have been able to afford the equipment necessary to make our work easier. Hopefully, now we are possessed of at least a smidgen of high tech gadgetry we will be able to resume the standards of production and delivery which we will be the first to admit have slipped somewhat in the last couple of years.

Also, with this issue we can proudly announce yet another NEW publication. Now we are linked into the global media through the wonders of The Internet our news gathering capabilities have increased a hundredfold - for example - this issue we produced seventy two pages of news which had to be whittled down into the NEWSFILE section of this magazine. Obviously we cannot do justice to all the information we have been sent, so as from September 1998 we shall be producing a monthly newsletter in addition to "Animals & Men". If you wish to subscribe merely send a quid for each month that you want to receive it to us at the editorial address. There is no set length for a minimum subscription so you can subscribe for one month or one year - it is all the same to us! As long as enough people want to receive the newsletter we shall continue to publish it.

On a sadder note, one of our major influences - the legendary Fortean Tony "Doc" Shiels has parted company with us as of this issue. He was the "Surrealchemist in Residence" for the CFZ for over three years, but after a series of events over recent months he has become dissatisfied with the state of contemporary forteana and has decided to leave the field. He will be sadly missed, and we hope that at some stage he will return to the fray. When he does there will always be a berth for him aboard the Good

Ship CFZ and an open bottle of rum will be waiting for him. Until then, however, in his words "*The Wizard of the Western World has other Fish to Fry*" and in ours "*Doc Shiels has left the building*".

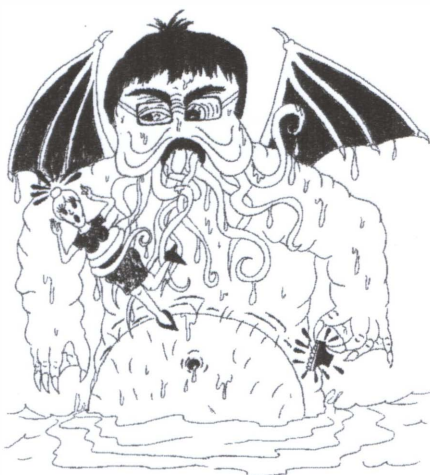
Let's hope that, like Elvis, he will be back.

On a practical note it means that we will not be republishing his books and so all you guys who ordered any Shiels material can either get a refund or can transfer your credit to the new newsletter or to the 1999 Yearbook or whatever!

On more pleasant subjects, Richard Freeman has now joined the full time inhabitants of Crypto Mansions here in Exeter and has brought his own inimitable style (not to mention an unhealthy obsession with things appertaining to the works of H.P. Lovecraft) to our little hovel in Exeter. He is responsible for the libellous pic of me which is printed below and which I am reliably informed depicts your beloved Editor as Great Cthullu - the sleeper in the corpse city. The young blonde struggling in my tentacles is my own business entirely!

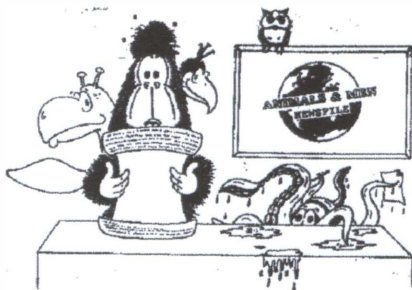
Until next ish, in the words of the immortal "Spinal Tap" "*err... we hope you like our new direction*"...

Jon Downes



NEWSFILE

COMPILED THIS ISSUE BY
**JON DOWNES AND
 RICHARD FREEMAN**



LAKE AND SEA MONSTERS ETC



SLIME DRENCHED TENDRILS

A deep frozen giant squid, was flown from New Zealand to Kennedy International Airport and then trucked to the American Museum of Natural History on Central Park West. Museum scientists watched anxiously as the creature was slowly revealed in its

glory, its tentacles and body curled up in a cramped packing case, its huge eyes hidden from sight.

"It's tremendously exciting," said Dr. Neil Landman, curator of invertebrates at the museum. *"To have a look at a actual giant squid is a dream I've always had. It's gorgeous."* The museum's squid, though a baby, is 25 feet long. Caught in December by fishermen in New Zealand, it is in an excellent state of preservation, and is possibly the best giant squid specimen in existence. Museum scientists plan to inject it with preservatives as soon as it is sufficiently thawed. The 25-foot baby joins the museum's 46-foot model of an adult giant squid, which is featured in the new biodiversity hall. The museum plans to study the squid carefully, and perhaps eventually to put it on public display, which will depend partly on how well it survives the rigors of thawing. Though the animal is immature the scientists say they should be able to determine its sex. Dr. Landman added that the giants were so poorly understood that the age of the 25 foot specimen was a total mystery. *"Is it 2 years old? Five years old? One hundred years old? Nobody knows. And nobody knows the depth that these animals live at. I'm involved in a project trying to answer these questions"*. The museum's beast almost got away. In Los Angeles, after the flight from New Zealand, the squid and its packing case proved too heavy for the aircraft that was scheduled to take it the rest of the way. So it had to wait. As a result, the squid landed late at Kennedy, in the afternoon rather than the morning. *"We're really pleased that it got onto the next flight,"* said Dr. Landman, the curator. *"There were a lot of pins and needles."* Among the uncertainties was what might happen if the giant squid started to thaw or emit a strong odour while passing through Customs.

As it turned out, the squid had to go through Customs twice, in both Los Angeles and New York, delaying its arrival still further. Steve O'Shea, a marine scientist at the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research in Wellington, New Zealand, (See A&M16) who accompanied the squid on its flight, said the giant had been captured commercial fishermen and frozen immediately.

The baby, he added, was one of several recent catches. Mr. O'Shea said the squid was a gift from the New Zealand agency to the museum, which paid about \$10,000 for its transportation. Modern scientists have repeatedly tried to catch the beast and observe it in its

deep lair, using nets on long lines, submersibles equipped with bright lights and lately, robots tied to long tethers—always to no avail. All that began to change in the last decade off New Zealand. Fishermen and scientists there worked to develop a series of deep commercial fisheries, going after exotic fish for the consumer market. As the pace picked up, the fishermen began occasionally hauling up giant squids that were apparently feeding on dense schools of fish at depths of nearly a mile. A system of reporting was initiated so that Government scientists in Wellington learned of the catches and often received body parts or whole carcasses to study. Recently, the run of landings has picked up and thrown the field into a high state of excitement.

Mr. O'Shea, who is in charge of collecting giant squid data throughout New Zealand waters, from both Government and commercial vessels, said yesterday that the new specimens were in beautiful shape, most especially the one acquired by the museum. In the past, he said, dead animals have often been a shambles, hacked into pieces by fishermen or so bruised and abraded that parts were unrecognizable. *"It's the best specimen that we've had,"* Mr. O'Shea said of the museum's acquisition. *"It's not the largest, but it's the best."*

NEW YORK TIMES, June 11, 1998

RICHARD'S COMMENT: the stars are right, and the spawn of Great Cthulu are rising heralding his glorious awakening from his aeon long sleep in the drowned corpse city so he can ravish and slay amongst the world of men again.

EDITORIAL COMMENT: shut up Richard!

LAKE ILIAMNA MONSTER

From the January 1988 issue of ALASKA magazine, page 17:

"The Lake Iliamna monster once again has reared its legendary head. On July 27, several, reportedly sober, eyewitnesses say they saw a 10-foot, black "fish" leaping and splashing in the lake, about five miles northwest of Pedro Bay village. Verna Kolyaha was fishing from a skiff with her mother

and sister when they saw the creature. Kolyaha approached to within 100 feet of the creature, which she said was shaped like a whale, with a white strip along the fin on its back. *"It made an almost complete circle around us,"* Kolyaha told the *Bristol Bay Times*. Back at the village, Rainbow Bay resort owner Jerry Pippen and pilot Jerry Blandford were airborne within 30 minutes of the sighting, but saw nothing but a large ripple in the lake.

The next day, however, Pippen reported seeing "a really huge seal ... squirting water six to eight feet in the air." Pippen said the animal was cream coloured, with lighter markings. Sightings of a huge creature that lives in the depths of Alaska's largest lake are so persistent that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game keeps an open file labelled, "Lake Iliamna Monster." In 1963, a department biologist was flying his small plane over the lake and for 10 minutes watched a creature that appeared to be about 25 to 30 feet long swimming below the surface. It never came up for air.

The biologist estimated the beast's length by comparing it to the aeroplane's shadow on the water. A number of times in recent years, sport fishermen near the villages of Iliamna and Pedro Bay have reported a big, peculiar, snake-like form moving along at the water's surface.

Explanations for the creatures that have been observed range from a lost whale that strayed in from the ocean to a huge sturgeon to a species of freshwater seal.

The Native people say the creature is a monster that doesn't like people and upsets boats that stray too far from shore, but there's no scientific evidence to prove any theory."

CADDY TO A T?

Wednesday 8th June, 1998, marked one year since the sea monster known as Cadborosaurus was last seen in British Columbian coastal waters, but this could just be a cycle when the numbers of the monster are on the decline, said Ed Bousfield. Bousfield is a research associate with the Royal Ontario Museum, and co-author of the controversial paper which first gave a scientific description to the creature. "El Nino affects the food," he said, "but I think the bigger factor is the noise pollution in the straits. There is so much marine traffic there now, it is driving it away." Bousfield

caused more controversy, when he presented a scientific paper on his link between Caddy and the mysterious monster of the Okanagan to a recent symposium of cryptozoologists in Kelowna. Bousfield has submitted his paper to two scientific journals for peer review and possible publication. Caddy was a regular visitor around Vancouver Island in the past four years, with more than 20 documented sightings but no photographs. *"There have been 300 sightings in the last century alone,"* he said. *"It has also been seen in nine different lakes in B.C. The connection with Ogopogo is that where you find these sightings, you find sea-run salmon. If there are not as many sightings now it could be that it is going into a low-ebb cycle the same as the salmon are."*

In his paper, Bousfield said the areas where Ogopogo has been seen were all linked to the Pacific, but are now cut off by dams. He said 10,000 years ago Caddy probably followed salmon up streams into lakes in the Columbia and Fraser drainage basins and became landlocked. The similarity of the two creatures with a snakelike body, humps or coils, horselike head, flippers and split tail indicates they are related, he said. *"Glacial and post-glacial evidence suggests that Okanagan's Ogopogo is probably a freshwater form or variant of the reptilian species Cadborosaurus willsi."* Victoria (British Columbia) Times-Colonist Tuesday, 7 July 1998.

THE BEASTS OF THE OLD BRIGADE

Monster-spotters are flocking to Lough Eske, three miles from Donegal Town, for a glimpse of a monster nicknamed 'Eskie'. Seamus Caldwell of Harvey's Point Hotel is one of those who believes he "saw something" in the icy waters. *"It was 2:30pm on Sunday when a load of the guests starting moving down to the pier to the lake,"* he said. *"They said they had seen something and when I looked out, I saw something moving up and down at about 300m out. The banqueting manager played down suggestions that his eyes might have been affected by a slack holiday season. "We're in the business of selling food, not monsters,"* he told The Star. Local Ard na Mana B&B boss Annabel Clarke also believes in the monster, despite seeing nothing herself so far. *"The monster was probably up around Harvey's looking*

for scraps - he's probably quite hungry and lonely." But her husband Kieran thinks there maybe a real link between the region and Lough Ness. *"Some lakes in Donegal are said to be connected by current to Scotland,"* he said. *"These creatures can't live forever, they have to find ways to perpetuate themselves so there must be more than one - ours could be a cousin of Nessie."* (*The Star*, Friday July 3rd 1998)

A FISHY FATWA?

TEHRAN (Reuters) - A game fish from distant California, a marlin, has been caught by an Iranian fisherman in the Gulf, Iran's Fisheries Research Centre said. A tag on its fin indicated the 178 cm (70 inches) long, 35 kg (77 pound) big game fish, caught off the Gulf coast port of Bushehr, had swum thousands of miles from California. Perhaps this is some bizarre piscine attempt at revenge for the Iranian victory over the US in the world cup?

SWAMP THING

The Asian swamp eel has been found in canals, ditches, streams and ponds near Tampa and Miami, Fla. The species is spreading and has the capability of invading and harming freshwater ecosystems throughout the Southeast, including the already-besieged Everglades system, according to the U.S. Geological Survey scientists who found the species in Florida. The exotic creature is a highly adaptable predator, able to breathe air and to live easily in even a few inches of water, especially in warm climates. *"This species exhibits unusual behaviour, appearance and adaptations,"* said Dr. Leo Nico, a biologist with the USGS Florida Caribbean Science Center in Gainesville, Fla.

"It has the potential to spread into freshwater ecosystems throughout the Southeast where it could compete with or prey upon native fishes. Imagine a creature with all the attributes necessary to successfully invade and colonise the Everglades and other southeastern wetlands. Well, the swamp eel may be that creature."

Scientists say they suspect the swamp eel may have escaped from a tropical fish farm or have been a pet released from an aquarium. The species, they believe, is already firmly established in Florida. CZOneList

OH THE SHARK DEAR.....

On the night of February 20, 1998, three fishermen in Macajalar Bay, Cagayan de Oro, caught a fish they couldn't identify. A local radio station reported the find the following morning. The fish was later hacked into pieces and consumed that day. Subsequent reports, quoting government sources, said the strange fish was a whale shark. But research conducted by this writer using the Internet revealed that it was a megamouth, an extremely rare species with previously only 10 sightings worldwide. (CZ OneList)

OUT OF PLACE



SNAIL TALE

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A species of snail that is considered one of the worst agricultural pests in California has been discovered in Pennsylvania, posing a potentially expensive threat to the state's farms and nurseries. *"The last thing Pennsylvania wants is this snail rampaging across the countryside,"* said David Robinson, a snail specialist for the U. S. Department of Agriculture. *"It's a major pest. It's one of the worst snail problems there is. It feeds on practically anything green and growing."* The brown garden snails were discovered last month in the garden of a Philadelphia schoolteacher, who told officials that

they had been in her garden for 10 years. Before that, the snail has not been known to survive the winter in Pennsylvania, though state officials fear it may be adapting. California spends about \$7 million a year to battle the snail, which was brought to that state in the 1850s from the Mediterranean, as a delicacy for restaurants. One threat to Pennsylvania agriculture is the direct damage to plants, but other states also might refuse to import Pennsylvania products because of a snail infestation in the state. State officials plan a survey of state parks and commercial greenhouse operations to determine whether the snails have spread beyond the Philadelphia neighborhood where they were discovered. State Department of Agriculture scientists said the snails probably arrived in Philadelphia on garden plants imported from California.

CHUPA CADAVER?

The following story was posted on the Internet by (I think) Loren Coleman who lifted it from an Arkansas Newspaper report: *"Treasure hunter Dane Chastain just might have located the biggest treasure of his life. The Oklahoma native says he has discovered and retrieved the decomposed body of an alien being in the woods around Fort Chaffee, Arkansas. In a story broken on Little Rock radio station, KARN News Radio, the body is said to be small in stature, mostly bones at this point but still having skin 'like a fish' covering it. The remains also have silver hair and a strange fin protruding from its back. Ft. Chaffee has been held under considerable suspicion by a number of UFO researchers for years and was most recently in the news in the 80's when hundreds of Cuban refugees were sent there for detention and processing. Chastain is said to be en route to the International UFO Museum in Roswell with the remains"*

Full story and photograph in next issue.

YIP YIP BABOON

BOSTON (AP) - Boston Garden lore took on another odd chapter - even after the venerable arena's demolition - with the discovery of monkey bones amid the rubble. Said to house gremlins who plagued visiting basketball teams, the former home of the

Boston Celtics built in 1928 was dreaded for problems real and imaginary, but there were never reports of a resident monkey. The mysterious remains found in the wreckage last week prompted demolition workers to pause for a moment of silence. *"The Celtics might have to change their mascot,"* former Garden director Larry Moulter said. *"This obviously was a true fan."* Visiting teams over the years complained about dead spots in the Garden's famed parquet floor and perceived slights like the occasional lack of hot water in the showers, but none ever mentioned a rogue monkey swinging off the backboard to swat away jumpshots. Officials have no idea where the monkey might have come from. The remains didn't look old enough to be from the great monkey escape of 1936, when Frank Buck's "Bring 'Em Back Alive" animal show nearly lost a passel of monkeys during the show. And besides, all those feisty critters were supposedly rounded up. A check with Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey didn't turn up any leads either, despite the fact the circus performed at Boston Garden in 1994. And although monkeys were part of an old "Wizard of Oz" show at the Garden, none of the ones dressed up in wings were reported to have flown the coop. *Boston Globe, Boston, Massachusetts Associated Press, 23 May 1998 Saturday*

GOING TO THE DOGS

25 May 1998 SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) _ There may be only about 500 New Guinea singing dogs in the world and one has spent the past month in the Spokane County Animal Shelter. The dog left the pound on Friday for Cat Tales, an exotic animal park north of Spokane. Scirocco had been languishing on death row while shelter workers tried to find him a home, said Nancy Sattin, the county's animal control director. *"It would have been a shame to have to put him down,"* Sattin said. The 2 1/2-year-old dog might become a daddy, if a suitable female can be found, said Janice Koler-Matznick, a singing dog expert in Central Point, Oregon. *"It's a big deal,"* she said. *"They're definitely going extinct if we don't do something soon."* The breed was discovered in the early 1900s in the remote highlands of New Guinea, isolated from the rest of the world by the rugged terrain and fierce tribes of the area. The dogs, which can weigh about 25 pounds, got their name from their high-pitched, sing-song howl. Sattin believes Scirocco may have been born at an exotic animal farm in Western Washington and lived in Stevens County for a time. She would not identify

the woman who gave the dog to the shelter. *"The woman who owned him just couldn't handle him,"* Sattin said. *"She had trouble keeping him home."* While singing dogs like people and are small animals, they generally don't make good pets. Their instinct to run and hunt small mammals and birds is overpowering. *(Fortean List)*

P-P-P-PICK UP A PENGUIN

RIO DE JANEIRO (Reuters) - Penta the penguin came in from the cold to warm the hearts of Brazilian soccer fans. When the stray penguin turned up in the sea off Rio de Janeiro, surprised beachgoers took it as a sign of luck for the national team in the soccer World Cup and adopted it as a mascot for the team. They draped the bird in a green and yellow national flag after rescuing it and nicknamed it Penta, or Fifth, for the fifth World Cup soccer title the reigning champions were hoping to win in France. They had it pose for TV cameras during public parties after Brazil's 3-0 victory over Morocco before stowing the penguin in a beer cooler to await zoo officials.

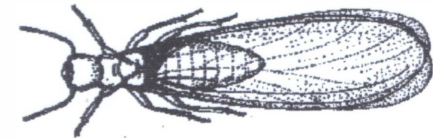
SHE'LL BE CAIMAN ROUND THE MOUNTAIN

HAMILTON, Ohio (AP) - What he wanted was a catfish. So Matthew Viars, 17, put his line into the Great Miami River on Tuesday evening with some friends and relaxed under a canopy of stars. He didn't get catfish. What he got was a 6-foot-long alligator. *"We saw a big splash,"* Viars said. *"Its head was up and its tail was moving back and forth in the water."* The mysterious gator hasn't been seen since. It's the second time an unexpected reptile has popped up in the strong-moving river. In December, a 4-foot alligator was pulled from the Great Miami just north of the latest reported sighting. The Butler County sheriff has declared an alligator alert. *"Don't make the gator a bad guy. He's an innocent victim here,"* said Johnny Arnett, a Cincinnati Zoo official advising police. *"People are buying a lot of these animals and finding out that there's too much to handle and just turning them loose."* The zoo doesn't have enough employees to spend days searching for the gator but would be willing - possibly along with a club of reptile enthusiasts - to help catch it.

Boston Globe/Associated Press, 5 June 1998

A BIT CLOSE TO HOME FOR COMFORT

(WHEN YOU OWN A HOUSE ONLY FORTY MILES SOUTH!)



PEST control experts will begin attempts next week to eradicate a colony of more than a million house-eating termites on the north Devon coast (James Landale writes). The voracious bugs from southern Europe, believed to be the most destructive in the world, have eaten their way into two holiday homes. Nick Raynsford, the Construction Minister, said the Environment Department would spend £129,000 on a 12-year programme to wipe out the colony, using a toxin called hexaflumuron.

Termites were first discovered at the two properties overlooking Barnstaple Bay at Saunton four years ago and were thought to have been destroyed by chemical pesticides. But an even greater infestation was discovered two months ago. The 4mm-long termites, *Reticulitermes lucii* fungus, live up to seven metres underground. *The Times June 3 1998*

WHERE'S ROD HULL WHEN YOU NEED HIM?

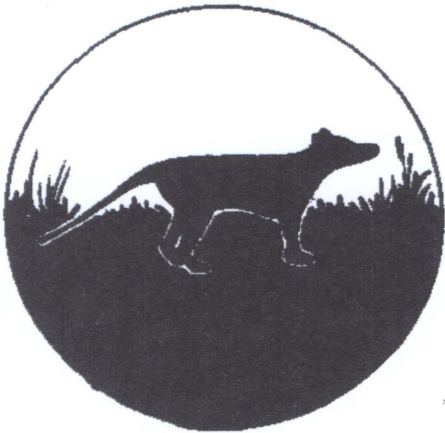
BURLINGTON, N.C. (AP) - Authorities have been on the trail of a big bird that's been seen wandering around town during the past two weeks. Three emu sightings have been reported to the Alamance County Sheriff's Department in the past two weeks, but deputies haven't found any loose birds, said Sgt. Ann Park of the department's animal control unit. The large, flightless birds have razor-sharp claws and are very dangerous, she said. "It's still on the loose," said Burlington Police Capt. Steve Lynch, who saw the bird Saturday near a service station. Lynch said he thought the long-necked, long-legged, 4-foot tall bird was an ostrich, but a fellow officer told him it fit the description of an emu. The bird disappeared in a nearby field, he said. Later that day, a passerby tried to lasso a big

bird seen near the former Shea's Restaurant building, Lynch said. The department received three calls about the creature Saturday, he said. Police haven't been able to determine who owns the bird or where it came from. No one has reported a missing emu, Lynch said.

ODDS AND SODS

WOLFTRAP, BEULAH AND OLD COURTHOUSE ROADS. About May 1, several sightings of an animal, described as a coyote or a cougar, were reported. Animal Control's wildlife biologist interviewed witnesses and examined the area of the sightings and found a footprint resembling a cougar's. The biologist and a representative of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland fisheries unsuccessfully attempted to photograph the animal with a motion-activated camera installed in nearby woods. There were no reports of threatening behavior by the animal.

NEW AND REDISCOVERED



NEW SPECIES?

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) - The Vietnamese capital of Hanoi is buzzing with excitement following reported sightings of rare giant turtles in a downtown lake where thousands of pedestrians pass daily. And amateur video

footage purportedly of the turtles, long believed to be nothing more than myth and legend, now has skeptics wondering whether the giant beasts really do exist. For years, people have reported sighting three giant turtles in Hanoi's Hoan Kiem Lake. The latest sighting, and perhaps one of the most credible, came on March 24, when passers-by caught a glimpse of the turtles as they surfaced to take in the spring air. An amateur cameraman caught the creatures' appearance on video, which subsequently aired on Vietnamese television.

The station also claimed the turtles made a second appearance on April 5. Researchers who have been trying to get a glimpse of the turtles believe they could be the only ones of their kind in the world.

Stories about the mysterious creatures have been circulating for about 500 years, starting with the legend of King Le Loi and the giant turtle of Hoan Kiem Lake. According to legend, the gods gave Le Loi a magic sword, which helped him battle the Chinese invaders. Having freed Vietnam, the king and his courtiers were boating on the lake when a giant turtle arose, took the magic sword, then plunged to the depths and returned the blade to its divine owners. Since that time the lake's name has been "Ho Hoan Kiem," which means "Lake of the Returned Sword." The story is retold in thousands of schoolbooks, and in popular performances at Hanoi's water-puppet theatres.

Mythology and science mix in the work of Hanoi National University's Professor Ha Dinh Duc, the world's foremost expert on the turtles of the Returned Sword Lake. *"The Hoan Kiem turtle is the world's biggest fresh water turtle. It can measure 2 meters (6 1/2 feet) long and can weigh as much as 200 kilograms,"* said Professor Ha Dinh Duc of Hanoi National University.

Professor Duc has been studying the turtles for the past decade, sometimes in conjunction with international reptile specialists. Some biologists feel these turtles could be the same as a rare species found near Shanghai, China, but Professor Duc disagrees. *"I've compared these with other fresh-water turtles elsewhere in the world and I see real differences. I hope further studies will show this is a new species,"* he said.

A Hoan Kiem turtle, found and preserved 30 years ago, is now displayed at a small temple on an island in the lake. The plaque tells visitors it is thought to be more than 500 years old -- old enough, in fact, to be the turtle of the legend. A comparison of the preserved turtle with images of the Shanghai species shows clear differences in coloration and head shape, supporting Dr. Duc's thesis that this could be a new species. Much remains unknown about these ancient monsters living in the center of downtown Hanoi -- their number, reproductive ability, origins, and especially, whether or not they're unique to the Lake of the Returned Sword.

"If we have co-operation from international experts and they determine this is a new species, it will be a significant contribution to world biological diversity. And since the turtles are right here in the middle of urban Hanoi, many people can easily come to see them," Professor Duc said.

Meanwhile, plans are afoot to clear the lake of pollution that could potentially harm the creatures, and the construction of an artificial beach has been proposed to facilitate breeding.

NEW BIRD FROM COLUMBIA (OK YOU THINK OF A JOKE ABOUT AN ANTIPITTA)

June 11, 1998 PHILADELPHIA (AP) -- Robert S. Ridgely was hiking down an Ecuadorean mountain path on a trip to record bird songs last November when he and a fellow ornithologist heard a strange sound -- a call akin to an owl's hoot and a dog's bark. *"He and I recognized right off the bat that this was something very peculiar that we heard in the distance,"* recalled Ridgely, director of the Center for Neotropical Ornithology at the Academy of Natural Sciences.

What Ridgely, 52, and the young Ecuadorean Lelis Navarrete, heard and eventually saw high in the Andes Mountains was the discovery of a lifetime - a new bird species. *"It didn't occur to me that something completely unknown was going to appear but in fact that's exactly what happened,"* Ridgely said. Once he saw the large bird with the unusual white facial markings, he knew right away that it was *"one of the most distinctive new birds to be found in a while."*

It appears that this new species is the second largest known Antpitta, Ridgely said. Its most striking feature is a broad white facial stripe that arches below the eye, contrasting with a black crown. About one new bird a year is discovered. The find was unusual in that it occurred in a well-explored area near the Podocarpus National Park. *"It's a remarkable bird and any discovery of a new species is truly remarkable these days. There just aren't many left to find,"* said John W. Fitzpatrick, director of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology in Ithaca, New York.

With some 9,000 species in the world, Fitzpatrick said, only about one new bird a year is discovered. About 40 minutes after Ridgely and Navarrete heard the call from about a half-mile away, the bird suddenly started to sing within 50 feet of them. Ridgely, who did not have a camera with him, made a quick tape-recording of the bird and played it back in hopes of eliciting a response. It worked. *"The bird came crashing right back in front of me, right in the undergrowth."*

In January, a team set up nets to photograph and capture birds. Four specimens were sacrificed for scientific study. New species usually are very similar to previously known birds, Ridgely said. *"That's where this new Antpitta jumps out as being really stunning. Not only was it found in an area that is relatively well known, but it is so different,"* he said. Ridgely and other ornithologists have set up a foundation to raise money to buy land to protect the bird's habitat, much of which has been cleared for cattle grazing.

ANOTHER NEW SOUTH AMERICAN BIRD

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (AP) — The scientists said its song was unlike any they had heard before. And when they hung nets to capture the bird, they found out why - it was a species unknown to science.

Researchers at the Federal University of Parana said the tiny, gray-black bird that they captured in 1997 also had a unique habitat: a marshy area inside the city of Curitiba, 420 miles southwest of Rio de Janeiro. Marcos Bormschein, Bianca Reinhert and Mauro Pichorin named their new bird, a member

of the Scytalopus genus, the lowland tapaculo. They said its scientific description and name will be published later this year. A similar bird lives in the forest only a few miles away from where the newly discovered bird makes its home, but that bird has a different song and never wanders to the marshes. Similar birds also live in the Andes Mountains, more than 2,000 miles westward. But closer study of the lowland tapaculo determined that 11 factors, from the shape of its feathers to its bone structure, were unique, Bormschein said. It measures about 4 inches long and weighs half an ounce. Jose Fernando Pacheco, an ornithologist with the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, confirmed the finding. *"The song is different and the type of terrain it inhabits is different,"* he said. The lowland tapaculo is the second new bird species that Bormschein and Reinhert have discovered.

TIE MY KANGAROO DOWN...

KAWAU ISLAND, New Zealand (CNN). A breed of Australian wallaby thought to be extinct for a century has turned up alive and well - in New Zealand. DNA testing by Australian researchers shows that a group of Tamar wallabies on Kawau Island, north of Auckland, are descendants of a wallaby population that vanished from mainland South Australia early this century. It turns out that the wallabies - which are similar to kangaroos - were shipped from South Australia to New Zealand in the late 1880s by New Zealand's governor, Sir George Gray. The discovery presents an opportunity to re-establish the breed in Australia. And some New Zealanders won't be sorry to see them go. *"They look cute - they may be cuddly - (but) they've got a big strong kick, and they eat everything that grows,"* said Dick Vritch of the New Zealand Department of Conservation. Indeed, the more than 2,000 Tamar wallabies on Kawau Island are endangering several native species of birds.

(Internet: CZ OneList)

THE ONZA WHICH AIN'T

Finally the news that everyone has been suspecting for many years has been released. As predicted by Clinton Keeling (amongst others) in these very pages, the female onza shot in 1986 and examined by the ISC is no such thing - merely a malnourished female puma. Our standards of gentlemanly behaviour preclude us from saying that we told you so!

TERATOLOGY

ABNORMAL AMPHIBIANS (AREN'T THEY ALL)

The recent finding of abnormal frogs in many different parts of the USA and Canada spanned a wide range of amphibians and was not limited to species, geography or climate, according to James J. La Clair of The Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, Calif. In a new report in the April 14 Web edition of Environmental Science & Technology, La Clair and colleague John Bantle offer an explanation for these findings by examining the effects of pesticide degradation in the early amphibian development. La Clair's group found that S-methoprene, an insect growth regulator that was introduced in the late 1970s to control fleas and mosquitoes, posed little risk to the development of amphibians. However, when exposed to sunlight, water and micro-organisms, La Clair found that S-methoprene breaks up into other products that dramatically alter embryo development. By adding minute amounts of these degradation products to developing embryos of the African clawed frog, *Xenopus laevis*, the Scripps group found that the embryo developed into a juvenile with deformations similar to those found in nature.

POLAR BEARS IN MIDDLESEX SHOCK!!!!

TROMSO. SCIENTISTS have discovered polar bear cubs with both male and female sex organs. The deformities are thought to be linked to the increasing pollution in polar regions. The four hermaphroditic bears were found in the Norwegian Arctic territory of Svalbard, where pollution levels are known to be high. Government officials and the researchers who found the newborn cubs on the islands of Edgeoya and Hopen suspect that the deformities are caused by polychlorinated biphenol chemicals (PCBs). The chemicals, which accumulate in fat reserves, are used in everything from electrical transformer fluids to degreasing agents in nuclear submarines, and are building up in the seals on which the polar bears feed. PCBs are among the thousands of man-made substances that scientists believe mimic animal and human sex hormones. Sex changes in fish have been monitored in Britain and in alligators in America, but

the polar bears are believed to be the first mammal to show such acute damage. Dagfinn Stenseth, the Norwegian Government's special adviser on polar affairs, said yesterday that the findings had implications for wildlife and human beings. *"The polar bear, like us, is at the top of the food chain. We are very concerned,"* he said. PCBs are banned in many countries, although Russia is believed still to use them. They are persistent pollutants that remain in the environment for many years.

The polar bear research adds to worldwide attempts to identify possible links between man-made chemicals and sexual deformities and diseases in human beings, as well as animals. Over the past 50 years, sperm counts have fallen in men living in industrialised countries. Some of the chemicals appear to mimic the female hormone oestrogen, while others appear to block or copy the male androgen hormones. A spokeswoman for the Norwegian Polar Institute, said researchers had studied 90 polar bears this season out of the territory's population of some 2,000. Andrew Derocher, the research scientist who made the findings, said yesterday that the bears were seen in April and May. The researchers had been discovering polar bears with both female and male characteristics for three years, he said, but this year's tally was the highest so far. It means that bears with both sex organs may make up nearly 4 per cent of the population, which is far higher than chance, and indicates that up to 80 polar bears in Svalbard may now be affected. *"What we don't know is if this phenomenon is circum-polar or just confined to polar bears in the Barents, which is more polluted,"* he said. Details of the findings have been published during the 22nd Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting, taking place in Tromsø, Norway. Delegates from 43 nations that have signed the treaty, including Britain, are discussing how best to deal with a string of threats to the continent in the wake of the ratification of the Protocol on Environmental Protection earlier this year.

The Norwegian findings relating to the Arctic, which is better studied, have strengthened moves to increase monitoring of wildlife and the environment in the Antarctic. Over the weekend, delegates agreed that a comprehensive report on the Antarctic environment, drawing on studies from countries such as Britain, was a priority.

The Times 2/6/98

PULL THE UDDER ONE

WINTHROP, Iowa - A two-headed, four-eyed, three-eared calf born earlier this week turned an eastern Iowa farm into a magnet for the curious. News reporters, neighbors and visitors were trekking to the farm operated by Brian Slife and his father Gary for a peek at the animal, a Holstein named "Reflections" because of the matching white patches on its two heads. The calf probably has less than a 50-50 chance of surviving, *"but every day it lives those odds improve,"* said Jim McMillan, a veterinarian who delivered the calf.

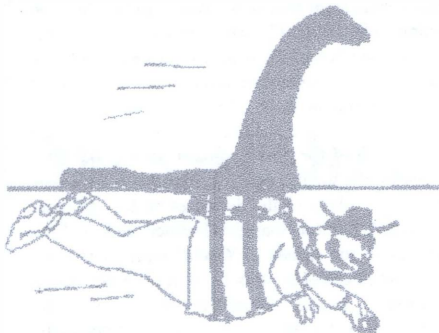
The calf appears to have one brain - both tongues move when it tries to lick - which could make walking difficult given the four eyes. It also has cleft palates in both mouths, a condition that can lead to pneumonia and other health problems in animals. McMillan said the family bought at an auction last week the heifer to which the calf was born. He said he was called out to help when the animal was having trouble with the birth. *"I examined the heifer and the feet were in a normal position. I went to find the head and it would not come up in a normal position for delivery,"* said McMillan. *"You have your arm inside the cow. I got to feeling around and there were two distinct noses. I knew then it could not be born in the normal way and performed a Caesarean section,"* he told Reuters. The family had no information on the parentage of the animal or what led to the malformations, McMillan said.

PIGS (TWO DIFFERENT ONES) - WELL SORT OF

May 3, 1998. LOS ANGELES (AP) - Even pigs with two snouts and three eyes have people who love them. Ditto the pig was born with those deformities at an Iowa farm and was to be sold to a circus freak show. But a group called Pigs Without Partners bought the animal for \$5,000 and spent another \$1,000 to ship Ditto to Los Angeles. Ditto currently has to eat from a tube because of his extra snout but planned surgery should allow him to feed like any other pig --except that Ditto will still have his unique features. Pigs Without Partners is now trying to find a surgeon close to Southern California since the group says it would be dangerous to ship the animal long distance after the operation.

RICHARD'S COMMENT: The birth of such disgusting malformed freaks is an obvious portent for the rising of Great Cthulu from his cyclopean tomb in slime drowned city of R'lyeh...

EDITORIAL COMMENT: I said SHUT UP Richard!!!



OTHER STORIES

GOODBYE ENGLISH DOG-ROSE (SNIGGER)

LONDON (Reuters) - Princess Diana is buried on land used for years as a pet cemetery and known to the staff at her childhood home as "Dog Island," a former housekeeper for her family said. The leafy Oval Island at Althorp, the Spencer family's rural estate, was used as a place to bury hunting dogs that belonged to Diana's grandfather Jack, Maudie Pendrey told The Daily Mirror.

"I cannot believe Earl Spencer could be so heartless as to bury his sister in a dog burial ground," she told The Mirror. *"It is a desecration."* Pendrey worked for the Spencer family into which Diana was born for more than 22 years, the newspaper said. She told the paper she had seen some of the dogs' gravestones on the island, but that the stones were removed to make room for Diana's memorial. *"I saw them. There were five dogs' gravestones with their names on them. They were about 2 1/2 feet high ... I understood there were other dogs buried there as well but without headstones."*

GOT MY MOTOR RUNNING GET OUT ON THE HIGHWAY.....

WASHINGTON (AP) — Climbing off his Harley Davidson Road King Classic, Wisconsin Gov. Tommy Thompson grabbed a toothbrush and some paper towels and prepared to wage war on the feathered foes of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial: pigeons. Joined by about 250 fellow hog riders, Thompson rode from Madison, Wis., to Washington to celebrate his state's 150 anniversary. They came armed with supplies to clean pigeon droppings off the austere black walls and four granite stones to lay at the base of the monument. *"This is a very moving experience because so many of the riders are Vietnam vets and for some of them this is the first time back at the wall,"* said Thompson, a four-year Harley rider. Many of the delegates broke into tears as they sang "The Star-Spangled Banner" and read the inscriptions on the stones. *"Great many of us quit partying, don't drink or smoke. Haunting memories of the sights, sounds, stench of war tears at our frail spirit plus ravages our soul,"* Minneapolis resident Gerald "Mack" McDonel read from a plaque that he brought to Washington on the back of his motorcycle. Not everyone was pleased with the ceremony, however. Gentry Davis, deputy regional director of the National Park Service, said he was concerned about how the group was cleaning the wall. *"If we allow people to just come in and just clean the wall it could damage the names,"* Davis said. He said he wasn't offended at the implication that the park service doesn't keep the memorial clean, but did add that "if we see any major pigeon drops or bird drops, we try to clean it up."

HOWL

A shop worker who is convinced he is a werewolf is suing his bosses in Romania because they will not give him time off when there is a full moon. The man says he feels restless and irritable even during daylight hours when the moon is at its peak. *Source unknown; June 1, 1998*

SPANK YER SKUNK

The following note was posted on an Internet Exotic Pets forum and I couldn't resist including it! *"Have he ever hit or spanked the skunk for discipline? The skunk will remember that and always treat him like*

that. My friend spanked his wife's skunk and from then on, the skunk would pee on his side of the bed whenever she got a chance.

HEART'S FILTHY LESSONS

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Ghost Boy, a rare albino koala, made his debut at the San Diego Zoo to oohs and aahs from adoring animal lovers. The only known albino koala in captivity, the tiny marsupial clung to its mother's back in its first public display Friday, showing off snow-white fur, a cute pink nose and matching eyes as it munched eucalyptus leaves. The koala — named Onya-Birri in Aborigine because of its unusual lack of pigment — was born in September, roughly the size of a jelly bean. Now about 2 pounds, it will reach 18 pounds when full-grown. Ghost Boy spent its first six months of life tucked safely inside his mother's pouch. When he first poked his nose out in March, zookeepers couldn't believe their eyes. *"There were three of us, and no one would believe it on their own, so we'd go and get the other one just to make sure,"* said keeper Chris Hamlin. Visitors to the zoo — young and old — gushed as Ghost Boy crawled atop his mother's head, using her ears as steps. As the mother, named Banjeeri, navigated a branch, the crowd gasped as one when Ghost Boy slipped briefly from her neck before latching onto her stomach. Albinism, or a lack of pigmentation, can be present in genes but not show up for generations, Hamlin said. Ghost Boy's mother has had other offspring — a koala baby is called a joey — but all had normal light gray fur. The animals native to Australia are known worldwide as the cute, fuzzy symbol of the country. Ghost Boy will spend his life at the zoo. Koalas usually stay with their mothers until they are about a year old, becoming solitary animals when full-grown. He will eventually be allowed in some of the outdoor enclosures, but only on overcast days. He's perfectly healthy, keepers said, but because he has no pigment his eyes are extremely sensitive to light and his skin could burn easily. *"We'll just have to keep him inside on sunny days,"* Hamlin said.

FOOTBALL CRAZY

The summer of 1998 has been centred, for many (including Graham, but not me and Rich), about football so it seems appropriate that A&M include a soccer story. It appears that Marc-Vivien Foe, a star player from The Cameroon was being courted by Manchester United....

"the deal, which will cost united upwards of £3 million depends on the healing power of gorilla bones and hedgehog-hunting. Foe said: 'they are taking off the plaster on June 23, but in Cameroon. healers have said they will be able to cure me in three days by burying my leg in the ground and putting fire around it. They have also recommended massage with gorilla bones while invoking the spirits of my ancestors. physiotherapy would include going on a hedgehog hunt'." The Guardian 11.6.98

BIGGLES BREAKS HIS DUCK

LONDON - A duck that cannot swim has become an honorary flight lieutenant at a British air force station and, been outfitted with a life jacket.

The June edition of the Ministry of Defense's house journal reports that Jemima was found by airmen in the emergency water supply lagoon at the Royal Air Force's Marham base in eastern England. Suffering from a shortage of oil in her feathers, she was paddling furiously to try to keep afloat. The Aylesbury duck, which has now become a station mascot, is pictured wearing a bright red inflatable life jacket, designed to keep her head above water.

OLD WHALE TALE

ANCHORAGE - Scientists believe they may have found a way to determine the life span of the Arctic's largest inhabitant, the bowhead whale.

Biologists are putting the final touches on a study that shows bowheads may live more than 150 years. That could make them the world's longest-living mammal - longer even than elephants, which live to be 60 years old. Until early this decade, data suggested the 75-ton whales lived well into their 60s. But Native hunters began finding stone harpoon tips - a kind last used in the 1880s - embedded in the blubber of the bowheads they landed. After a half-dozen were found, scientists realized they had to do further research.

RICHARD'S COMMENT: Such a stomach-churning cavalcade of perversion and horror must surely mean that Great Cthullu

has left the place where the angles are "wrong" to gorge himself on human souls as the faithful sing hosannas of despair.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Any more of this crap, Richard, and not only are you sacked as Associate Editor but I'll start charging you rent!

NEWSFILE XTRA

KILLER BEES

STING SOMETHING SIMPLE

MEXICO CITY (AP)— A 39-year-old man was killed by a swarm of bees in northern Mexico after authorities failed to respond to emergency calls, the government news agency Notimex reported. Juan Manuel Alaniz Gomez died of a heart attack on his way to a hospital Tuesday in Ciudad Obregon, 420 miles south of Phoenix. Notimex quoted local police official Edgar Jacobi Noris as saying.

Jacobi Noris said the heart attack was caused by the bee stings, and that the swarm may have been Africanized killer bees, descendants of aggressive bees from Africa that escaped from breeding experiments in Brazil in 1956. Notimex quoted fire-fighter Sergio Martinez Silva as saying fire-fighters received an emergency call about an aggressive swarm of bees, and passed the alert onto the Secretariat of Agriculture, Ranching and Rural Development because fire-fighters didn't have the necessary equipment.

People at the secretariat never responded because it was nearing the end of their work day, Martinez Silva said. When fire-fighters responded to another call — this time about Alaniz Gomez — the man was covered in bees, and fire-fighters needed to turn their hoses on him to get the bees off. Africanized bees, which tend to attack in swarms, have been blamed for the deaths of more than 1, 000 people since 1956, including six from Arizona and Texas.

I GOT A BUZZ OUT OF THAT

California El Centro - Africanized "killer bees" may have claimed their first fatality in the state. A DNA analysis by the state confirmed that a pitbull chained in a back yard died last week when he was stung by a swarm of the honey bees. *USA TODAY - WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 1998*

VIVA LAS VEGAS

Nevada Las Vegas - Two more swarms of Africanized "killer bees" have been found in southern Clark County, officials said. The bees were collected from trap sites near Davis Dam and Searchlight. Two swarms were discovered in May in the Laughlin area. Agriculture officials are setting more traps. *THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 1998 - USA TODAY*

NEWSFILE XTRA

REPORT ON THE PRESS LAUNCH (MIKE THOMAS OF NEWQUAY ZOO) OF BIG CAT VIDEO FOOTAGE 21.7.98

by PAUL CROWTHER,

*Plymouth CFE Photographic lecturer.
(to be read in an American accent)*

They say that the sun shines on the righteous. The problem: was the sun shining on me, or Mr Thomas? Mr Thomas is the curator of Newquay Zoo, and the man whose video footage of, quote, A Large Cat, I was driving to Newquay to see. As I drove I had a smirk on my face, a smirk bigger than the one Sean Connery had as he watched Ursula Andress come out

of the sea in Dr No. I was on a mission - I was a man with a question for Mr Thomas, and I knew the answer - because unbeknown to him, I had seen his video.

Two months earlier as part of a team of Beast Busters dubbed Mr Pompous and Mr Arrogant by the local press, I had seen his footage - footage which some how had got in the hands of a national newspaper. These press boys were no mugs; they had seen other newspapers make fools of themselves and these boys weren't about to do the same, so they called in the Beast Busters. I am the photographic expert and my partners the Biologist / Zoologist, but even I knew that Clive Lloyd did a better impression of an exotic cat as he walked to the crease for my beloved Lancashire, than the moggy we had watched (albeit possibly a big moggy). The clincher was when the moggy walked past a forestry-style bench: it didn't even make the height of the horizontal beam. At least my partner had had the decency to kept a straight face, even if I could not.

As I drove on, one thought crossed my mind over and over again. - Would he show the clip of the moggy with the bench? There were rumours that the tape had been re-edited and I know if I was him, I'd sure as Hell edit that scene out. Hence my question, is this the same footage as shown to a National newspaper reporter in June, or not?

11.30 Newquay Zoo, and the paving stones were cracking under the baking sun. I found myself amid honourable members of the press fraternity being ushered into of all places, the Zoo's Tropical House.

Mr Thomas began this five-act-tragedy by showing us some fancy pictures of African Cats mmmmm not bad. This was followed by some plaster casts of impressive paw prints... getting better. He then introduced two kids Daniel and Kieran ? they are Beast Watch!a nice touch. Kids: the aaah factor.

Next, came Mr Thomas' rabbit from a hat, the anonymous cameraman - John. Unfortunately the six-foot blond haired John retold his story like a policeman giving evidence at the Old Bailey. Then the heat cracked the wrong man. John didn't want to give the footage's location away - and then promptly revealed that the site was not a million miles away from the Jamaica Inn on Bodmin Moor.

Then came the moment we had all waited for - the video.... all twenty seconds of it! To say the silence was deafening is an understatement. The silence was broken by a female member of our ranks murmuring "...it's a cat!" Mr Thomas was on the ropes and beginning to look like a man going into his tenth round with Mike Tyson, but, to give him credit, he still came out swinging. My sucker punch - the missing footage - was feebly countered by the old anonymity strategy; Mr Thomas had clearly forgotten that Anonymous John had already given the location away. The press sensed blood and were not about to let their prey loose.

A voice called out. "All those who believe they have just witnessed a video of a large cat raise their hand. None were raised. There then followed television interviews, analysis of the video footage, and the obligatory radio talk show. I was quite a popular chap for a while. As I drove home one thought kept gnawing away in my mind: Why, Mr Thomas, why? To cap it all, half way home there was a torrential downpour. Even the gods were weeping. Mr Thomas you have set back the credibility of myself and others who believe in the beast, who are trying to find genuine footage or photographs, by years. Why, Mr Thomas, why? It wasn't even April the first...

A Chat with Lazarus

by Paul Crowther

(Still a Photographic lecturer at Plymouth CFE)

Twenty four hours earlier I had participated in the ritual slaughter of Mike Thomas of Newquay Zoo, after a trial by media. There was one troubling thought rattling through my mind, as I drank my evening Scotch between James Bond style smirks. Why Mr Thomas? Why?

I needed to talk to him, and I needed to talk to him fast. Surely a man of his intelligence would not put himself through such treatment deliberately. How could I talk to him? Would he talk to anyone? Was he capable of talking after what BBC South West had done to him the previous evening?

In desperation I resorted to a modern mystic method of communication, I used the telephone! Surprise! He would actually talk to me. Like an impatient kid in a toy shop begging for a toy before its parents dragged him outside again. I blurted out my question - "Why Mr Thomas? Why? You must have realised that something like the murder of Caesar was going to take place at the Press Conference!" I didn't give him a chance to question my parenthood nor to cut me off without first hearing my question.

For a man who had been sacrificed by the media twenty four hours earlier his voice was clear and calm as he told me what should have happened the day before.

Originally there were to have been five members of the local press in attendance by invitation only. (No, I was NOT on the list). They were to view the video footage and then have a "gentleman's discussion" about the footage during which Mr Thomas would give his arguments for the footage being of a "wildcat" - not a beast, a puma or a panther or any other large man eating felid as the public imagined it to be. The results of this discussion were to be reported and any fears that the public might have had about man/child/large pet eaters would have been allayed.

Wildcats are fairly large aren't they? They are also definitely not in the habit of revealing themselves in public", I chipped in. Not necessarily so, retorted the calm Mr Thomas. They are in fact not that larger than a domestic cat, (I believe that this was his defence against my lack of park bench footage attack, (about which shall we say we agree to differ, seeing as Mr Thomas has more experience with these types of animals than I do!) Combine this with urbanisation, then perhaps the dietary needs of these animals outweigh their fear of human contact....mmmmmmmm.

Mr Thomas continued to outline his theories of wildcat populations and urbanisation and hybrids.

still in a cool, calm tone. "But! Mr Thomas!" I nearly screamed. "What was your reason for showing the video to the press like you did?"

The answer - to show the general public what a Wild Cat looked like and hopefully more people would come forward with sightings photographs and video footage. "But", I interrupted "After seeing what happened to you would you get in touch with you? The surprise is, it appears that Mr Thomas's gamble has worked. He said that he has received four phone calls in the last twenty four hours of a larger than normal black cat which is terrifying the moggy population of Liskeard. Members of his team were investigating these sightings as we spoke.

There was one point that Mr Thomas and I did agree on: until the general public sees either still images or video footage of "Wild Cats" in any shape or form in Cornwall to the quality that they see when watching Wildlife programmes on TV then unfortunately/fortunately the sceptics hold the upper hand.

Conclusion: Reports of the demise of Mr Thomas have been greatly exaggerated. As you read this he is probably on a "wild cat chase". If he comes up with the goods, I for one will back him. If, however, there is any doubt in my mind, then.....

TYRANNOSAURS, TERROR BIRDS, TOURACOS AND TAMANDUAS: THE HOTTEST NEWS IN VERTEBRATE PALAEONTOLOGY

By Darren Naish

Scarcely does a month go by without significant palaeontological news of some nature, and in this brief resume' I hope to bring you in on some of the most exciting of recent finds and theories. We start our rundown of news with arguably the most impressive of all animals ever, gigantic theropod dinosaurs, before moving on to the smaller, but no less impressive, bird-

like dinosaurs and birds. Recent developments have also been made in the study of Cretaceous placental mammals, early anteaters, and carnivorous marsupials. In palaeoanthropology, a new paranthropine skull (*Paranthropus boisei*) has just been described - hot on the heels of the new species *Australopithecus bahrelghazali* and *Homo antecessor* - and a DNA study has shown that Neanderthals (*H. neanderthalensis*) were almost certainly not close relatives of modern humans. I also have some big news on coelacanths. Unfortunately, I don't have the time or space to describe all of these discoveries at length, so I'll stick with the ones that interest me the most.

They Say Size Isn't Everything

Big news - in every sense of the word - is the recent discovery of an enormous *Tyrannosaurus* that apparently exceeds "Sue", previously the world's biggest tyrannosaur (at 12.5 m and 6-8 tonnes), by 15-20%. By playing with these figures, some newspaper journalists have made it known that the new specimen would be perhaps 21 m long and 9 m in height: I don't understand this, as 20% bigger than 12.5 is 15, still... If any if this bears any semblance to the truth, then *Tyrannosaurus* may well be reclaiming its throne from the likes of Argentina's *Giganotosaurus* and Morocco's *Carcharodontosaurus*: theropod genera that, at least as far as the described material goes, do not definitely seem to have been truly bigger than "Sue" though both were initially claimed to be. The story of the theropods size war is a tangled one...

Prior to the giant tyrannosaur's debut, *Giganotosaurus carolinii*, described by Rudolfo Coria and Leonardo Salgado in 1995, was reckoned to be the biggest of the three with a 1.65 m skull and a 12.5 m length. The new *Carcharodontosaurus* material, described by Paul Sereno and eight other authors in 1996 - 71 years after material of this animal was first named as '*Megalosaurus saharicus*' (Deperet and Savornin, 1925) - also indicates an animal of about 12.5 m length. *Carcharodontosaurus* was supposed to have had a skull of 1.63 m, but Sereno's reconstruction has an over-lengthened premaxilla, and a more realistic length is 1.52 m. Sereno *et al*'s new material, incidentally, shows that *Carcharodontosaurus* was emphatically not a giant marine theropodan cetacean analogue, as was suggested by Bakker, Siegwarth, Kralis and Filla in 1992! *Giganotosaurus* was thought

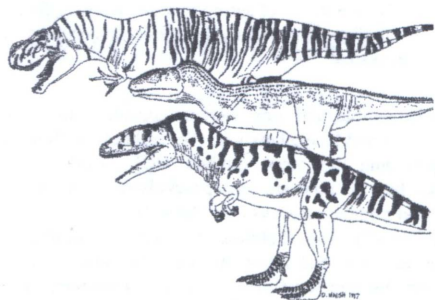


Fig. 1: The three biggest theropods compared.
From top to bottom, *Tyrannosaurus rex*
(Maastrichtian of western N. America),
Giganotosaurus carolinii (Albian-Cenomanian of
Argentina) and *Carcharodontosaurus saharicus*
(Cenomanian of Morocco).

to be the biggest because, though its total length is the same as 'Sue', 'bigness' is a measure of weight to length, and the story was that *Giganotosaurus* was a real robust and thick-boned theropod that, when alive, would outweigh 'Sue'. Also, new skull material of *Giganotosaurus* discovered in March 1996 (unpublished as of writing) will allow revision or correction of the 1.65 m length given above - the rumours are that the true giganotosaur skull was bigger than 1.65 m (and therefore way bigger than 'Sue' and exceeding *Carcharodontosaurus*). Furthermore, at a talk he gave in 1996, Rudolfo Coria showed a slide of a dentary identical to that of the *Giganotosaurus* type, but 10% bigger! If the dentary scales in proportion to the total length in both the type and this 10% bigger specimen, and if the estimated 12.5 m length for the type is correct (note that there are too many 'ifs' for this exercise to be taken seriously), then the dentary might indicate a giganotosaur of 13.8 m. OK, but... even so, would a giant giganotosaur still be the biggest?

Greg Paul, a renowned expert in the reconstruction and life appearance of dinosaurs, went and had a look at the giganotosaur type in 1996. Contrary to claims of it being a chunky heavyweight, he found that *Giganotosaurus* was less robust and with less massive proportions than big tyrannosaurs like 'Sue': if a giganotosaur and tyrannosaur of equal lengths were compared, the tyrannosaur would be heavier. So, despite all the hype generated by the new

discoveries, it appears that 'Sue' was simply the biggest all along. Of course, the story doesn't stop there.

A number of other theropods are even bigger - or at least longer - than 'Sue'. *Saurophaganax maximus* (Chure, 1995), a big Morrison allosaur named for the diagnostic components of the *nomen dubium* *Saurophagus maximus*, is estimated at total length 14 m. Other Jurassic allosaurs and the torvosaur *Edmarka* grew nearly as big. However, all are shallow-chested animals probably about half the weight of 'Sue'. *Bruhathkayosaurus matleyi*, a supposed gigantic theropod with a lower leg about 2 m. long (suggestive of a possible 20 m total length), turned out to be a titanosaurid sauropod (there was a suggestion that it could have been fossil wood, so bad was the state of preservation). *Kelmayisaurus giganteus* is a rumoured giant theropod with a vertebral column of 22 m length. Chinese dinosaur palaeontologist Dong Zhiming is supposed to be describing this one, but what the truthful situation is I don't know. There have also been persistent suggestions that *Spinosaurus*, a sail-backed elongate Egyptian theropod, could have been 15 m long. It seems to have been a comparative lightweight however, and probably did not exceed 4 tonnes. A specimen perhaps 20 m or more in length (therefore perhaps 6-7 tonnes or more) was displayed at 1996's Society of Vertebrate Palaeontology meeting - it's only a snout-tip though, and whether it was actually *Spinosaurus* or not seems problematic. Some workers think that *Baryonyx* - a 9.5 m long theropod from Surrey, described in 1986 (Charig and Milner, 1986) - is closely related to *Spinosaurus* (the snout-tip mentioned above is very like that of *Baryonyx*). Angela Milner has recently stated that the *Baryonyx* type specimen appears to be a subadult - an adult therefore could have been perhaps 15 m long. Again, such an animal would be longer, but not heavier, than 'Sue'. At the time of writing, it would seem that there is still uncertainty as to whether the new giant tyrannosaur is actually *T. rex*, or a new species. *New Scientist* has just reported that skull parts (about two-thirds of the left side) from this fossil have been stolen. Another *T. rex* specimen, dubbed 'Mr. Z-Rex', is going up for auction ('Sue', incidentally, has now been bought by The Field Museum, Chicago). With a femur only a few cm shorter than that of 'Sue', this animal is another biggie and as it's supposed to be a male, is particularly notable. The assumption at the moment is that female tyrannosaurs were bigger than males, but this needs further confirmation before it becomes fact.

Feathers and Furculae

And yet more theropod news (let's face it, most dinosaur news is theropod news) has recently been reported in *Nature*: it's *Velociraptor*'s first preserved furcula. It's been said previously that a furcula is evident on the fighting *Velociraptor* (i.e. the specimen from Tugrugeen, near the Flaming Cliffs, Mongolia, preserved locked in combat with a *Protoceratops*), but Rinchen Barsbold, who has examined the specimen first hand, says this is incorrect. Furculae appear to be fused clavicles, though some ornithologists argue that they are actually a neomorph [brand-new structure not derived from pre-existing bits and pieces], and are now known for certain from a new allosaur-like theropod from Dinosaur National Monument, tyrannosaurids, oviraptorids and dromaeosaurids. What these furculae are doing in non-avian theropods is anyone's guess: the traditional 'explanation' for the presence of furculae is that they

have evolved as a sort of spring to assist flapping flight. So, are all furculae-bearing theropods descendants of flying ancestors?

This is possible, and some workers consider it to be the most reasonable explanation: The school of thought propounding this view, dubbed 'BCF' (Birds Come First), has all dinosaur groups evolving from small, arboreal gliding ancestors (see *Omni* 16 (9): 34-86; *FT* 108: 34-37). The flightless dinosaurs, according to BCF, are dead-end relics that have branched from a lineage leading ever-more bird-like dinosaurs.. and eventually to true birds. BCF theory's leading advocate - George Olshevsky - was won increasing unofficial support, but most dinosaur palaeontologists do not accept his views. To them, it is more likely, rather than being primitively present in early flyers, the furcula first evolved for another purpose (e.g. bracing of the sternal region) and was later adapted by flying theropods for use in flight

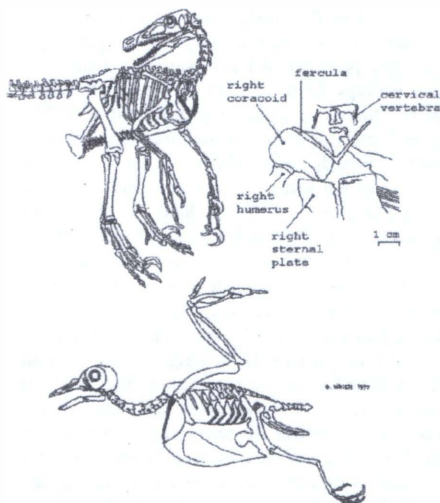


Fig. 2: Locations of wishbones (furculae) in *Velociraptor* (top left) and *Columba* (bottom), and as they looked when discovered in the sternal region of a fossil *Velociraptor* (top right), as seen in ventral view.

The abstracts from the 1997 Society of Vertebrate Palaeontology (SVP) meeting have just been published. As is to be expected, there was plenty to interest anyone interested in dinosaurs. 'Feathered' theropods continue to hog the limelight (see *A&M* 11: 10-11; *A&M* 12: 27-31). Having just appeared as resplendently fully feathered in Mike Skrepnick's cover illustration for Currie and Padian's new *Encyclopaedia of Dinosaurs*, it is fittingly ironic that the 'feathers' of *Sinosauropteryx* have apparently been debunked by Geist, Jones and Ruben - the three biologists best known as the scourge of all things Bakkerian. But they may have gone a step too far in suggesting that compsognathids were 'the first known semi-aquatic theropods'. I thought logic of this kind went out of the window with Bidar, Demay and Thomel (1972): they suggested that a *Compsognathus* specimen from Nice, France, had flippers and was an amphibious lagoon dweller, and they named it *C. corallestris* (distinct from the German *C. longipes*). However, this idea was never reasonable. The French *Compsognathus* is still odd in being quite a bit larger than the German one though, and palaeontologist Mark Norell recently followed a long history of speculation in suggesting that it may be a separate species. Some Chinese palaeontologists do not deem *Sinosauropteryx* distinct enough for its own genus, and are calling it *Compsognathus prima* (I've heard that the etymology is incorrect, and the species

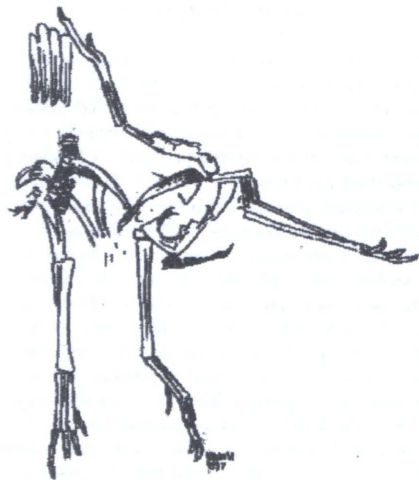


Fig. 3: Diagrammatic representation of *Protarchaeopteryx* skeleton. The unusual structures in the top left are the tail feathers.

name should be spelt differently to match the gender of the word *Compsognathus*).

Meanwhile, another Chinese 'feathered' theropod, *Protarchaeopteryx robusta*, is getting its share of attention. At least one specimen is reported as having large in-situ *Archaeopteryx*-style tail feathers, but the short forelimbs and large body size indicate that this animal was flightless. Kevin Padian reports that *Protarchaeopteryx*, despite its name, is not close to *Archaeopteryx*, nor even to maniraptorans in general [maniraptorans are all the descendants of the most recent common ancestor of dromaeosaurids and birds].

Terror-birds and Touracos: Turning Phylogeny on its Head

The phorusrhacids were a group of large, mostly flightless, predatory groundbirds that lived in the forests and grasslands of the Americas, Europe and pre-glacial Antarctica from Palaeocene to

Pleistocene times. The youngest phorusrhacoid known, the 3 m tall *Titanis walleri*, is from Florida (but there are rumours of specimens found as far north as Texas). Following the 1996 discovery of new Floridan *Titanis* material by Robert Chandler, it is now well known that, remarkably, phorusrhacoids did not have the small, stunted wings they used to be portrayed with - instead they actually had rather large stout arms with two clawed fingers (one of which was a mobile thumb). It is also notable that some phorusrhacoids, such as the late Miocene *Psilopterus colzeca* described by Tonni and Tambussi in 1988, had a hyperextendable sickle-claw on their second toe. Some living seriemas do too, as did the dromaeosaurids and troodonts of the Cretaceous.

Chandler reported on his new *Titanis* 'hands' at the SVP meeting, but, of equal interest (to me), he also presented his tentative preliminaries for an amazing theory of phorusrhacoid affinity. Seriemas (Cariamidae) are evidently the closest relatives of phorusrhacoids, and it was not a surprise when Chandler reported that he believed this to be the case. Surprising to the extreme, however, is his contention that the next closest relatives of the seriema-phorusrhacoid clade are the touracos!! Yes, touracos (Musophagidae), those fruit-eating arboreal African forest birds traditionally allied with cuckoos.

The surprises didn't stop there - Chandler thinks that condors (Vulturidae [no longer known as Cathartidae, by the way]) are the outgroup to the touraco-seriema-phorusrhacoid clade. Obviously only a basic outline of his data was presented in his talk and abstract - I look forward to the doubtless controversial technical paper!

Incidentally, though Chandler's theory may sound like a new one - it isn't. Palaeornithologist extraordinaire Storrs Olson - a man dedicated to the establishment of a bird family tree more realistic than the traditional one of Gadow (1893) and Wetmore (1960) - made similar enlightening suggestions back in 1985. Olson speculated on evolutionary relationships between hoatzins (pronounced 'what-zins') and falcons, and thought that these groups, with seriemas (and therefore phorusrhacoids), formed an endemic South American radiation of primitive land birds. He furthermore found that touracos seemed to be the closest relatives of accipitrids (hawks, eagles and Old World vultures)! Add to this recently analysed morphological and genetic

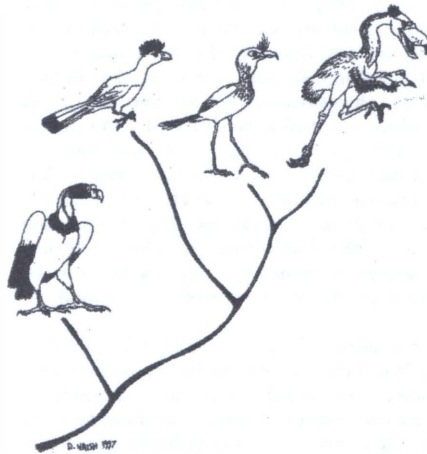


Fig. 4: The phylogeny of phorusrhacoids and their relatives as recently outlined by Robert Chandler. Phorusrhacoids and cariamids form the crown group; musophagids are their sister-group; Vulturidae is the sister-group to Musophagidae + (Cariamidae + Phorusrhacoidea).

data which indicates that condors are actually short-legged storks (ciconiids): Sibley and Ahlquist (1990), the two authors who have recently reclassified all living birds on the basis of their studies on DNA-DNA hybridisation, even list condors as a stork subfamily. It should also be noted that Sibley and Ahlquist's scheme blatantly contradicts other theories mentioned here. For example, they saw falcons and accipitrids as true relatives and part of an extended Ciconiiformes that, while it includes waterbirds like grebes, pelicans, storks and albatrosses, is not close to primitive land birds like touracos or hoatzins. Touracos, in the Sibley and Ahlquist scheme, are close relatives of owls and nightjars, while hoatzins are cuckoos. And to return to falcons, Heinzel, Fitter and Parslow (1987) are among several authors who have proposed a close relationship between falcons and owls! If anything is clear from all of this confusion, it is that a lot of work remains to be done on the evolution of virtually all bird groups.

Migrating Marsupials

South American phorusrhacoids lived alongside another group of highly successful predators, the borhyaenoid marsupials - a diverse group that paralleled placental carnivores in evolving mustelid-like, bear-like, dog-like and even sabretooth-like predators. Christian de Muizon (best known for his work on fossil seals and toothed whales), Richard Cifelli and Ricardo Paz have recently published new work on the affinities of early Palaeocene South American marsupials. Their aim was to resolve the affinities of the borhyaenoids. Borhyaenoids have previously been considered related to the Asian deltatheroidans, to the North American stagodontids (not to be confused with stegodontids, which are a group of fossil elephants), or to the Australian dasyuromorphs. The new work showed that borhyaenoids shared several unique features of the teeth and skull with didelphoids - the group that includes living didelphid opossums - and that the two should belong together as the Didelphimorphia. This group shares some odd dental features with the South American microbiotheres and the Australian dasyuromorphs: further, microbiotheres are evidently more closely related to dasyuromorphs than didelphimorphians as evidenced by their shared distinctive periotic bone in the skull, continuous lower ankle joint, and other features.

This anatomical data can be combined with biogeography: basically, marsupials originated in North America during the Cretaceous (the earliest known marsupial presently known, *Kokopellia*, is North American - there are suggestions now, however, that it is not a true marsupial but a very close relative) and moved southward. Didelphimorphians and microbiotheres evolved in South America - some didelphid didelphimorphians then confused things by moving via North America into Europe, northern Africa (reported in 1983) and central Asia (reported in 1985)*. These migrating didelphoids had all gone extinct by Miocene times, but following the formation of the Panamanian isthmus about 3 Ma ago, South American didelphoids moved into North America once more. Presently, the Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*) occurs as far north as southern Canada, where it occasionally suffers from frostbite on its ears. Unlike didelphoids, the ancestors of all Australian marsupials moved southward and flourished in Antarctica (where they became extinct) and, their final home (for now!), Australasia. This model of Australian

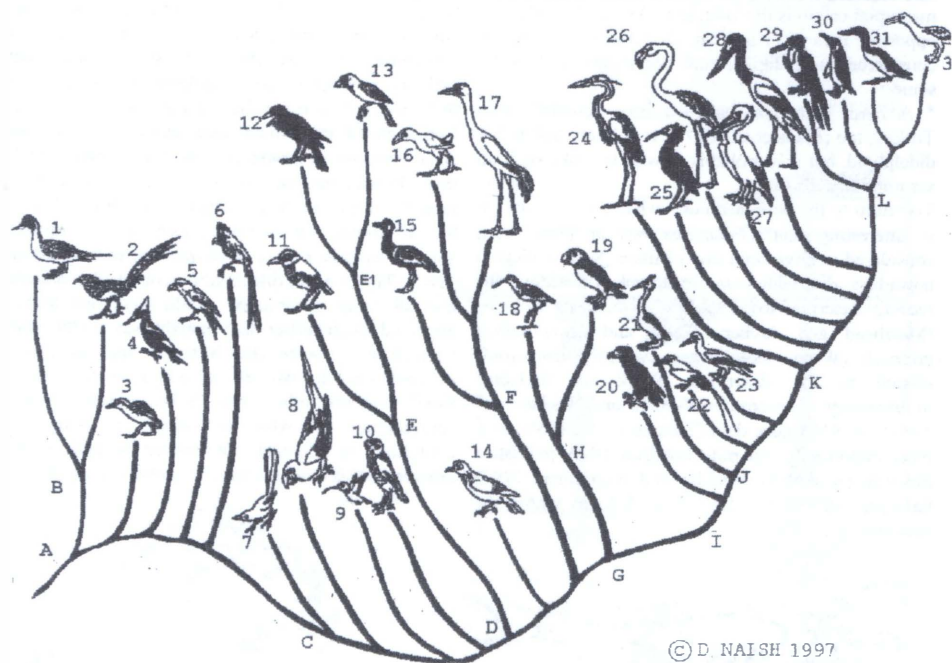


Fig. 5:-

The interrelationships of higher birds (Neognathae) according to the DNA-DNA hybridisation work of Sibley and Ahlquist (1990). Some of the more important or higher ranking clades are marked with letters instead of numbers.

A. NEOAVES. B. GALLOANSERAE.

1. Anseriformes. 2. Callomorphae.

3. Turnicae. 4. Picae. 5. Coraciae.

6. Colise. C. PASSERAE.

7. Cuculimorphae. 8. Psittacomorphae.

9. Apodimorphae. 10. Strigimorphae.

D. PASSEROMORPHAE.

E. PASSERIFORMES. 11. Tyranni.

EI. PASSERI. 12. Corvida.

13. Passerida. 14. Columbiformes.

F. CRUIFORMES. 15. Otididi. 16. Ralli.

17. Crui. G. CICONIIFORMES.

H. CHARADRII. 18. Scolopacida.

19. Charadruda. I. CICONII.

20. Falconides. J. CICONIIDES.

21. Podicipedida. 22. Phaethontida.

23. Sulida. K. CICONIIDA. 24. Ardeoidea.

25. Threskiornithoidea.

26. Phoenicopterioidea.

27. Pelecanoidea. 28. Ciconioidea.

L. PROCELLARIIOIDEA. 29. Fregatidae.

30. Spheniscidae. 31. Gaviidae.

32. Procellariidae.

Many of the relationships proposed in this classification are totally discordant with those indicated by morphological analysis and are not accepted by the majority of ornithologists.

marsupial origin is the 'Southern Dispersal Route': the opposing theory ('Northern Dispersal') used to be considered more likely, and apparently still is by some.

* A fossil marsupial has just been reported from Turkey, too (Maas et al., 1997). It is likely that it is a didelphoid, but it is probably unwise to make such an assumption at this stage.

To return to the borhyaenoids - whatever they are - it is interesting that *Thylacinus* has at times been considered to have been one of them. Such a view is nowadays discredited as thylacinids (including the recently described fossil species *Nimbacinus dicksoni* (Muirhead and Archer, 1990) and *Muribacinus gadiyuli* (Wroe, 1996)) are evidently dasyuroids related to the dasyurids. Work on thylacine immunology (Lowenstein, Sarich and Richardson, 1981), on RNA gene data (Thomas et al., 1989) and, most importantly, on mitochondrial DNA published this year (Krajewski, Buckley and Westerman, 1997) have also shown that *Thylacinus* belongs within the dasyuroids.



Fig. 6: Biogeography of carnivorous marsupials. K *Kokopellia*. P *Pediomyidae*. S *Stagodontidae*. B *Borhyaenoidea*. M *Microbiotheriidae*. De *Deltatheroidea*. Di *Didelphoidea*. Da *Dasyuomorpha*. See text for discussion.

Out Of Place Anteaters, Or The First 'Walking Fircones'?

One of mammalian biogeography's greatest puzzlers has to be the presence of *Eurotamandua*, a supposed advanced anteater, in the Eocene Messel shales of Germany. Anteaters (*Vermilingua*) seem otherwise to be an endemic South American group that evolved

there while, from Palaeocene to Pliocene times, South America was an island continent. The other xenarthrans, the armadillos (*Cingulata*) and sloths (*Pilosa*), also appear to be endemic South Americans that only got to leave their home continent with the formation of the Panamanian isthmus. A supposed Asian xenarthran, *Ernanodon*, is controversial. So what does *Eurotamandua*, an early European anteater, mean? *Eurotamandua*'s original describer, Gerhard Storch, argued that *Eurotamandua* was an advanced anteater closely related to living tamanduas (Storch, 1981). This is a real dilemma, as it means that anteaters and all other xenarthrans would have had to have appeared much earlier than thought (say, in the Lower Cretaceous or even the Jurassic) and could have evolved, well, anywhere. And all of this without any fossil evidence other than *Eurotamandua*, and in contradiction to what is known of mammalian evolution. A dilemma. Of course, several possible answers to this dilemma have recently been made.

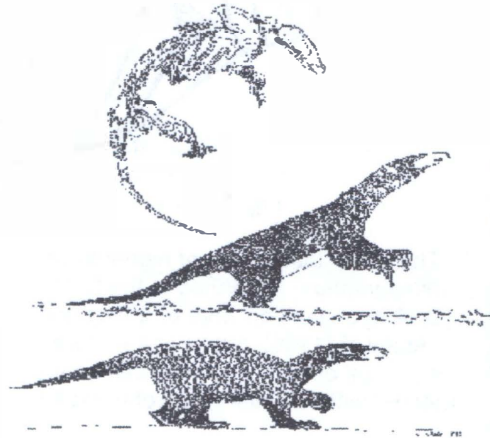


Fig. 7: From top to bottom, skeleton of *Eurotamandus joresi*, *E. joresi* restored as an anteater (based on earlier artistic restorations); life restoration of *Eomanis waldi* (the Messel pangolin). Note that, apart from the scales, the life restorations of *Eurotamandus* and *Eomanis* are actually not that different.

In a study of anteater evolution presented this year, Daniel Branham and Timothy Gaudin did not find that

their data supported Storch's view of *Eurotamandua* as an advanced anteater - instead it might have been a primitive sister-group to all other anteaters. However, the characters that support this interpretation (including lack of teeth and lateral process on fifth metatarsal) sound to me just like those that can easily be convergently evolved, so I don't buy it. A little better is Branham and Gaudin's other hypothesis that *Eurotamandua* is not an anteater at all, but the sister-group to sloths. So... *Eurotamandua* is not an anteater? Well, if that's the case, we may as well go the whole hog and embrace Shoshani et al.'s (1997) work: they examined *Eurotamandua* in detail and showed that, in fact, it does not definitely have the xenarthrous vertebral articulations that are diagnostic for xenarthrans (hence the name). What's more, it shares more features with PANGOLINS than with any other mammals. So... *Eurotamandua* is a pangolin? If correct, this resolves the dilemma of the out-of-place anteater and as we know from another Messel fossil, *Eomanis* (also described by Storch), that early pangolins were present in Europe, *Eurotamandua*'s new identity is not a biogeographical nightmare.

And Finally...

Coelacanths (Actinistia) are an odd group of fleshy-finned fishes (sarcopterygians) related to lungfishes and tetrapods, represented today only by *Latimeria*. An old suggestion is that coelacanths are more closely related to chondrichthyans than to bony fishes and tetrapods, but the case for this really isn't good - the features cited (e.g. pituitary anatomy, urea retention, fatty liver) are almost certainly primitive ones widespread in vertebrates, or are ambiguous, and are in any case outweighed by many more features shared by coelacanths and bony fishes. Coelacanths are famous for being rediscovered, but it is not often recognised how odd their fossil record is. In fact, it's pattern is unique. Coelacanths were incredibly abundant and diverse in ecosystems of the Devonian and Carboniferous, became very rare in the Permian, peaked in diversity in the Triassic, and then gradually decreased in diversity through the Jurassic and Cretaceous. Until 1994 (when the North American *Megalocoelacanthus dobiei* - from the very latest Cretaceous - was described by Schwimmer, Stewart and Williams), the most recent known fossil coelacanth was Europe's *Macropoma*, a fossil of Campanian age (Campanian penultimate

stage of the Upper Cretaceous: 83-74 Ma before present). These rare fossils show that, by the end half of the Cretaceous, coelacanths were becoming ever more reclusive from a palaeontological point of view. Not much longer, and they would disappear from the fossil record entirely.

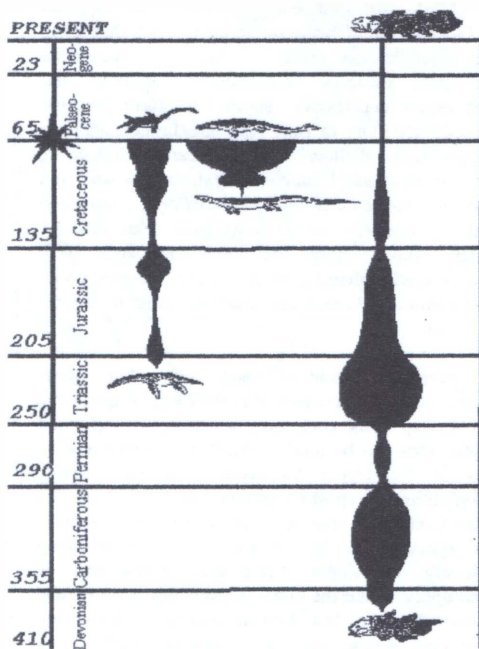


Fig. 8: The unusual fossil record of Actinistia (far right) compared to Plesiosaurs (extreme left) and Mosasauroidea (middle), the two most important of late Mesozoic marine reptile clades. The star marks the KT event. Notably, plesiosaurs and mosasauroids thrive at high diversity before the KT event, and leave no post-Mesozoic record. Coelacanths dwindle out slowly as they approach it.

Well, almost entirely (read on). In every conceivable way, the coelacanth fossil record is utterly unlike that of marine reptiles - common, abundant, well represented and widely distributed right up to their end-Cretaceous mass extinction - so those writers who think that

Latimeria can serve as an analogue for post-Cretaceous marine reptile survival are in error. The dwindling fossil record of the last known, reclusive coelacanths shows that *Latimeria* is the ultimate in red herrings.

It's traditionally been thought that virtually all fossil coelacanths were freshwater animals, but this is an over-simplification often based on unreliable geological evidence. Nevertheless, Jurassic and Cretaceous coelacanths appear to have become successively more marine, with late Jurassic *Undina* being from shallow lagoons, early Cretaceous *Macropoma* being from continental, shallow seas, and mid and late Cretaceous *Axelrodichthys*, *Mawsonia* and *Megalocoelacanthus* being from open, offshore waters. Another myth, that fossil coelacanths were always smaller than *Latimeria*, is also incorrect: both *Mawsonia* and *Megalocoelacanthus* grew to lengths of 3.5 m!

A persistent problem, and one that some cryptozoologists have played to their advantage, is the 65 Ma gap in the coelacanth fossil record. Surely, if coelacanths can be totally absent as fossils from the end of the Upper Cretaceous onwards, similar possibilities for post-Cretaceous survival exist for other Cretaceous marine creatures (e.g. plesiosaurs). As argued above, the extreme rarity and dwindling diversity of Upper Cretaceous coelacanths is thoroughly unlike the high-diversity 'out with a bang' pattern for the last known marine reptiles (see diagram!). Furthermore, now - and this really is big news - fossil coelacanths from the 65 Ma gap are known. Naomi Goldsmith and Ilana Yanai-Inbar (1997) have just reported early Miocene coelacanth fossils from the Negev (south) of Israel. Their finds may be especially important as they imply that the fossils are very similar to *Latimeria*.

This provides further proof that plesiosaurs etc. were not present after the Cretaceous (some plesiosaur fossils are known from the Palaeocene, but they are from rocks only a few Ma younger than the end of the Cretaceous anyway, and are in any case almost definitely reworked [i.e. from older, in this case Cretaceous, rocks]), as, unlike coelacanths, there are no Cenozoic fossil plesiosaurs.

Incidentally, in a classic case of 'thunderbird syndrome', I have long recalled the description in the

literature of another Cenozoic coelacanth ~ but have never been able to find the source. Recently, my misery was put to an end: the source is a 1986 paper by T. Orvig (published in that well-known geological journal *Geologiska Foreningens i Stockholm Forhandling*), and it described a Palaeocene coelacanth from Sweden.

STOP PRESS: UPDATES TO THE ABOVE

The above article was written early in 1997. Here are some of the latest developments relating to some of the stories covered above (as of July 1998).

Giant theropods

Claims that the new tyrannosaur specimen from Montana is 21 m long, and that it might belong to a new species, remain unsubstantiated. No data is forthcoming, but it has been asserted that there is no reason to think that the animal is not *Tyrannosaurus rex*.

In a 1997 analysis of variation within the genus *Allosaurus*, Smith did not find that *Saurophaganax maximus* was well differentiated from *Allosaurus*, and created the new species *Allosaurus maximus* for it. This is controversial.

Since the above article was written, the full descriptive monograph on *Baryonyx* has been published (Charig and Milner, 1997). More material both of *Baryonyx* and of *Spinosaurus* will be described in the near future.

Feathered theropods

The 'feathery' structures on the compsognathid *Sinosauropteryx* were not debunked by Geist, Jones and Ruben: their claim that the structures represented frayed collagen fibres from beneath the animal's skin is simply not correct as the structures are clearly not of dermal origin, and do not resemble frayed collagen fibres. A detailed examination of the *Sinosauropteryx* specimens and their integumentary structures (Chen, Dong and Zhen 1998) confirmed that the structures were coarse, pliable, and probably hollow strands covering the external surface of the animal. It could not

be confirmed that they were any sort of 'proto-feather', though this is looking increasingly likely.

Feathers on *Protarchaeopteryx* have now been officially verified and were widely discussed in the media following their coverage in *Nature* of 25th June 1998. Another small theropod from the same site, *Caudipteryx*, also has feathers preserved on its tail and hand. Neither of these animals are birds as they do not possess the several distinctive characters all birds do (e.g. very elongate forelimbs, unserrated teeth, reduced fibula.) and they thus prove that non-avian theropods did indeed have feathers. Padian's argument (that *Protarchaeopteryx* is not close to maniraptorans) did not prove correct: both *Protarchaeopteryx* and *Caudipteryx* are maniraptorans. *Caudipteryx* appears to be the most closely related of all non-avian theropods to birds, while *Protarchaeopteryx* is more primitive, and perhaps closer to dromaeosaurids.

Wolverines or Muddy Badgers?

By Chris Moiser

(See Front Cover Picture)

Since the mid 1970s there have been numerous reports of the Wolverine ('*Gulo gulo*') living wild in Great Britain. These reports have come from various parts of the country, and have been of differing degrees of accuracy. One recent newspaper report (Western Morning News 12.11.97) detailed four sightings in Devon in the previous twelve months. Other reports suggest that they are present in the Highlands of Scotland, and the Dyfed-Powys area of Wales as well. Despite the suggestion that there is a great deal of evidence to support the existence of a living and breeding population present, and that this population could be as high as 200 - 300 by 2010, (Hooper, T. 1998), convincing evidence is still absent. I would suggest that most sightings can be explained in a much more conventional way. Most sightings have been glimpses

of animals at night; other suggested evidence includes sheep kills, footprints, and in one incident loud snoring in a barn! (Hooper, T. 1997, 22). There is no record of the species having been recorded as indigenous in the United Kingdom, either in historic or prehistoric times. The likelihood of wolverines having been introduced, either intentionally or accidentally would appear to be slight for a number of reasons. Sir Christopher Lever, an acknowledged expert in this field, describes introduced species as having been introduced normally for one or more of three criteria. The animal must either be economic, sporting or ornamental, i.e. it was originally imported for commercial reasons, such as fur farming, for sport, such as shooting, or because it was good to look at. It seems highly unlikely that wolverines would have been imported for any of these reasons.

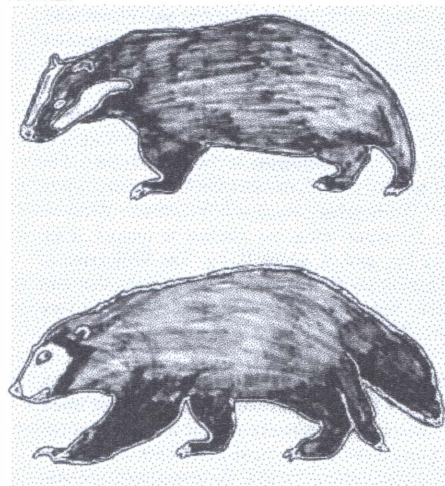


Fig.1. Badger (above) Wolverine (Below)

The only possible reason would have been for fur farming, however, although the fur has been used commercially, it has typically only been used in the arctic circle, on parkas. In this instance the fur is taken from trapped wild animals (Nowak and Paradiso 1983, 1005). The solitary nature and the habits of the animal, in conjunction with its reputation for ferociousness make it unlikely that it would be imported as a pet. Even if it was, this would be a solitary animal that had the potential to escape. Most authorities agree that the animals are entirely solitary in the wild, except when breeding. The animal is unlikely to have been imported

at any time for hunting, there would be too great an outcry from livestock owners, because of its reputation and the potential for losses of the smaller domestic livestock. It would not be a particularly good animal to hunt anyway in that it is, to all intents and purposes, inedible, and is likely to cause as much damage to hounds, as they are to it.

The nature and reputation of the animal then makes it much less likely to have been imported than many of the other species that are alleged to be living as introductions within Great Britain. In addition its habit of caching food and feeding on carrion would be both likely to bring it rapidly to human attention. I would like to suggest that these alleged sightings of wolverines within Great Britain are erroneous and that the animals seen are in the main European Badgers (*Meles meles*). The reasons for this are several fold, and in part rely on some recent personal observations on wild Badgers. If we consider the size first of all.

In his Encyclopedia of Mammals, David McDonald quotes the Badger as having a head and body length of 67 - 81 cm., the Wolverine is "up to 83 cm." The badgers tail is 15 - 20 cm., and the Wolverine, "up to 20 cm." The weights quoted are Wolverine, ♂, about 15 kg., ♀, about 10 kg; the Badger is quoted at ♂, about 12 kg., and ♀, about 10 kg. The Wolverine of course has longer legs than the Badger, but otherwise has a very similar body-size. The Badger is also very widespread throughout Great Britain.

Whilst it might be said that under modestly reasonable light at night the Badgers' black and white face mask is still very obvious, there are several colour variations of the European Badger. Most authorities refer to an albino, a semi-albino (where the eye-stripes are still visible), erythristic (gingery), and a melanistic form (very dark).

Ernest Neal reported that albino badgers "are not extremely rare", in his book "The Badger" in 1948. Unlike many albino and near-albino wild mammals the colouration of white Badgers does not seem to affect their longevity. In his 1970 book, "The White Badger", Gordon Burness writes about Snowball, a white Badger, who lived for an unspecified time, as an adult and paired normally.

One local zoological garden has had a white Badger visiting the owners garden for several years running,

(Palmer, J. 1998). This apparently normal longevity may be because, other than man, there is no top predator that takes Badgers in Great Britain. The lighter colour badgers are also prone to staining of the fur from the soil in which the setts are dug. If we then consider the albino, or semi-albino badger with dark soil staining, of the sort that might occur on a damp night, we have the appearance, to the lay person, or even a reasonable field biologist, of a Wolverine. Such animals could be seen sporadically, depending upon weather conditions, and once there is a suggestion, in the press, of a wolverine presence in one area, it supplies a rapid explanation for an animal not quickly recognised, either seen in that area, or elsewhere. If the misidentification is taken up by the media and regularly propagated, then sightings become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

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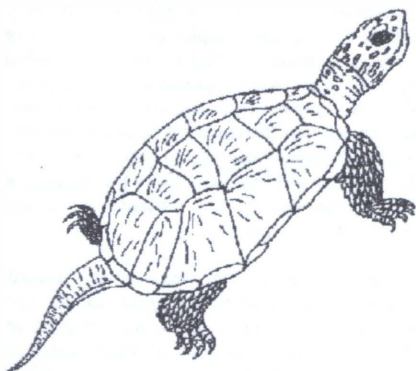
EDITOR'S NOTE: In variance to how this article has been misconstrued in certain quarters, neither Chris nor the CFZ are stating that there are NO wolverines at large in the UK, merely that it is our opinion that many of the wolverines reported are no such thing. This fascinating article gives ONE explanation which can account for SOME of the sightings

Turtle tales

by Dr. Lars Thomas

REDISCOVERIES

The last couple of years in Denmark have been very much in the sign of the turtle, or tortoise if you like. All kinds of strange turtles have been cropping up all over the place. It started in 1996 with the rediscovery of the European pond tortoise. Last heard off in Denmark in the bronze age, it was found alive and well in several parts of Denmark, notably the central part of Jutland, but there has also been sightings in several marshes north of Copenhagen, on Funen and on the extreme eastern island of Denmark, Bornholm.

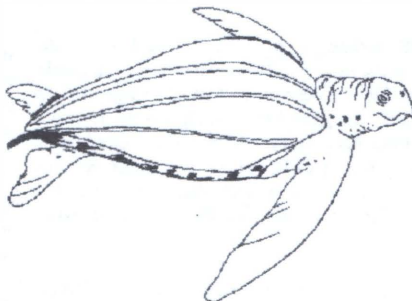


Later research showed, that the tortoise have actually been known for many years, but that most people have regarded them as released or escaped animals, which is unlikely as the pond tortoise is rather rare in captivity. We do have substantial population of red-eared terrapins though, so released tortoises can and do live in the wild in Denmark.

Two captured specimens of the pond tortoise have been DNA-tested, and although the results are not conclusive, they indicate that the animals are closely related to the nearest wild population in Polen, but also slightly different, which would indicate that they have lived in isolation for approximately 2.000 years.

THE BIG ONES

In the summer of 1997 some strange stories started coming in to yours truly about sea-turtles in western Denmark. Several people on the holiday islands Fano, Rømo and Mandø claimed to have seen sea-turtles coming out of the water and climbing on to the beaches. Noone could produce any photographs or any kind of solid evidence, so all of these stories were discarded as fruits of the silly season. At the end of November, things started to change.



People in southern Lillebælt (the narrow strait between Jutland and the central danish island Funen) started seeing a very large dark brown creature swimming slowly just beneath the surface. Every now and then it would raise a large almost melon-shaped head take a few deep breaths, and disappear under water again. Danish newspapers had a field day on this one, but the mystery was solved about a month later. On December 23rd a fisherman found the creature, a leatherback turtle, floating south of the Als Peninsula, on the extreme southern east-coast of Jutland. He towed it in, and it was picked up by the Fishery and Sailing-Museum in Esbjerg, where it is still located.

EDITOR'S NOTE: As part of our ongoing researches we are especially interested in reports of marine turtles in European waters. On a related topic we are always interested in acquiring living specimens of soft shelled turtles of any species for our own collection. If anyone in the UK knows of any of these creatures either for sale in a pet shop or free to a good home through any other means, please would they let us know. We are also always interested in specimens of the larger aquatic salamanders such as mud puppies, sirens, etc.

THE ZIPHIIDAE, THE STATE OF THE ART, AND A POSSIBLE NEW SPECIES

By Darren Naish

It is cliché' nowadays to refer to beaked whales (Ziphiidae) as the most poorly known of large mammals: nevertheless, this is a description that still rings true. Of the 20 presently recognised species, eight were described for the first time this century, and two were described for the first time this decade. These two most recently recognised species are of special interest because they represent the largest of all recently discovered extant animal taxa.

Mesoplodon peruvianus, referred to as the Pygmy beaked whale (Rails and Brownell 1991, Jefferson, Leatherwood and Webber 1993), Lesser beaked whale (Carwardine 1995) or Peruvian beaked whale (Dalebout *et al.* 1998), was described in 1991 on the basis of 10 specimens which were captured or had beached on the Peruvian coast between 1975 and 1989 (Reyes, Mead and Van Waerebeek 1991). Since then, *M. peruvianus* specimens have also beached on the Mexican coast (Rails and Brownell 1991, Jefferson, Leatherwood and Webber 1993).

M. bahamondi, for which the common name Bahamonde's beaked whale has been proposed (Reyes *et al.* 1997), was described in 1997 on the basis of a single skull discovered on Robinson Crusoe Island off Chile (the journal issue it was published in was dated 1995 but this is evidently the planned, and not the actual, publication date). Cardenas, Yanez and Van Waerebeek (1988) first reported this species as *Mesoplodon* sp., and Van Waerebeek (1996) was prepared to announce it as a new species in a short note published in 1996. Naish (1996) was the first reference to this species in the cryptozoological literature.

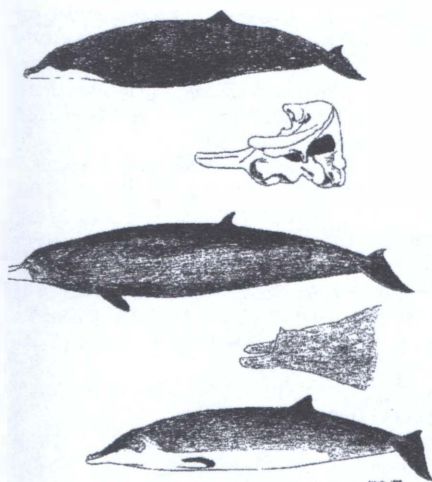
Evidence thus far unsupported by physical evidence suggests that other extant ziphiid species remain to be described. One officially recognised potential species,

Mesoplodon ap. 'A', is only known from eyewitness and photographic evidence. It has been recorded from the eastern tropical Pacific (Pitman, Aguayo and Urban 1987, Jefferson, Leatherwood and Webber 1993) and now the Peruvian coast as well (Van Waerebeek, quoted in Papastavrou 1997, Pitman in press). Naish (1996) and Reyes *et al.* (1997) propose that *M. bahamondi* and *M.* sp. 'A' are one and the same, but other identities, such as that *M.* ap. 'A' is *M. pacificus* (Pitman, Aguayo and Urban 1987, Nowak and Paradiso 1991, Naish 1996), are possible. Eyewitness reports of what might be other ziphiid species, also as yet unrecorded by physical evidence, have been discussed in the cryptozoological literature (Heuvelmans 1968, 1986, Naish 1996, Shuker 1997). A number of others have yet to be brought to widespread attention (Naish, in prep.).

A study recently published by Dalebout *et al.* (1998) is the first to try to provide a database for species-level identification of ziphiids based on mitochondrial DNA. The authors took genetic samples from 15 species of ziphiid which had been identified to species by a ziphiid worker, and which were represented by diagnostic skeletal or photographic evidence. The species identity of these samples was therefore not in doubt and they were used as 'reference' samples to which others, less securely identified or identified without the presence of diagnostic morphological data (referred to as 'test' samples), could be compared.

A number of interesting discoveries resulted. Comparison of the 'reference' samples to 20 'test' samples taken from animals which had stranded on New Zealand showed that four of these had been misidentified. One such sample, coming from an animal previously identified as an Andrews' beaked whale (*M. bowdoini*) proved to be a Blainville's beaked whale (*M. densirostris*). This is the first record of this species from New Zealand and means that the specimen involved joins a long list of other mesoplodonts which have also been misidentified as *M. bowdoini* (Guiler 1967, Nishiwaki 1962, Moore 1963, Tidemann 1980, Mead 1989). Even the holotype specimen of Hubbs' beaked whale (*M. Carlhubbsi*) recognised by a new species by Moore (1963), was misidentified by Hubbs (1946) as a specimen of *M. Bowdoini*. The discovery of *M. Densirostris* on New Zealand. This is not surprising as this species already had the widest known distribution of any mesoplodont. Its occurrence around the shores of new Zealand had already been predicted

holotype specimen of Hubbs' beaked whale (*M. carlhubbsi*), recognised. The discovery of *M. densirostris* on New Zealand, however, is not surprising as this species already had the widest known distribution of any mesoplodont. Its occurrence around the shores of New Zealand had already been predicted by Jefferson, Leatherwood and Webber (1993) and hinted at in Watson's (1988) distribution map.



1. Peruvian Beaked Whale
2. Bahamonde's Beaked Whale (skull)
3. Andrews' Beaked Whale
4. Blainville's Beaked Whale
5. Hector's Beaked Whale

Another sample came from an animal identified as a Cuvier's beaked whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*), but which turned out to be from *M. bowdoini* (Dalebout *et al.* 1998). This is also an important discovery because *M. bowdoini* is very poorly known, represented by only about 20 strandings worldwide and as yet unreported as a live animal by eyewitnesses.

In conjunction with the history of misidentification referred to above, *M. bowdoini* has also been problematic because of its apparent closeness to *M. carlhubbsi*. Dalebout *et al.* (1998) found that *M.*

carlhubbsi and *M. bowdoini* did not group together as close relatives however, calling into question previous suggestions that they are sister-species or even conspecific (Mead 1981, 1989). Curiously, in Dalebout *et al.*'s (1998) analysis, *M. bowdoini* grouped with *Tasmacetus* as a sister-group to the rest of *Mesoplodon*, implying that *Mesoplodon* is paraphyletic or biphyletic.

A particularly intriguing result is an extremely marked genetic difference observed between two specimens referred to Hector's beaked whale (*M. hectori*), one from South Australia and the other from the North Pacific. The large difference recorded by Dalebout *et al.* (1998) between the two specimens was far greater than that observed within any other ziphiid species, and when included in a phylogenetic analysis, the two specimens occupied markedly different locations on the mesoplodont tree. This strongly suggests that a new mesoplodont species has been discovered by way of its addition to the molecular database.

For more than a century subsequent to its discovery on New Zealand in 1866 (Gray 1871), *M. hectori* was assumed to be entirely austral in distribution. Then, in 1981, Mead (1981) published four stranding records, and referred to two sightings (both of which were photographed), which were of *M. hectori*, but were from the Californian coast. These demonstrated *M. hectori* to be present in the northern hemisphere. Rice (1978) had already published one of these photographs, but the animal had been misidentified as *M. carlhubbsi*. Ellis (1980) also published one, but without a caption identifying the animal to species. More data on *M. hectori* in the northern hemisphere was published by Mead and Baker (1987).

All of these northern specimens may well pertain to the same species as *M. hectori* from the south (they seem to, as all share good, diagnostic morphological characters (Mead and Baker 1987)). However, while both the northern and southern *M. hectori* specimens from which the samples used by Dalebout *et al.* (1998) were taken were reliably identified as having belonged to this species, it is evident that only one of them did. Which one cannot be determined without comparison of samples from more specimens (Dalebout *et al.* 1998). Dalebout *et al.* (1998) state that neither specimens matched the morphology that would be expected from any of the five species they

were unable to obtain samples from (Northern bottlenosed whale (*Hyperoodon ampullatus*), *M. bahamondi*, Ginkgo-toothed beaked whale (*M. ginkgodens*), *M. pacificus*, and *M. peruvianus*).

Based on their data then, the best conclusion at present is that a new mesoplodont has been discovered, and one that looks enough like *M. hectori* for it to be identified on morphological features as *M. hectori*.

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WATSON, L. 1988. *Whales of the World*. Hutchinson (London).

CLINTON'S COGITATIONS

by Clinton Keeling

Yes - Issue 16 of "Animals & Men" was belated, but only the churlish, insensitive and/or dim would dispute it was well-worth waiting for. Herewith random comments on for your delight, edification or exasperation...

If a (seemingly) literate adult (p.6) cannot tell the difference between a Leopard and a Puma - "...what she believes may have been a Leopard or a Puma..." - I don't think any of their zoological statements need to be taken seriously, besides wasting our valuable time. I was most interested to read about the Tokoloshe on p.7, as although some declare it to be nothing more than a malignant spirit - something like the Scandinavian Troll - there are others who swear it's a flesh and blood hairy hominid, not unlike the Agogwe from further north, up Mozambique way.

Whatever it might or might not be, it plays such an important part in the lives of so many Cape Africans that I was once told by an Afrikaans lawyer that a native accused of quite serious crimes could probably be acquitted if he could convince the prosecution that he'd been told to do whatever it was by Tokoloshe! And when it's borne in mind that this was a ruling dating from the old harsh days of apartheid it shows clearly how sincerely ingrained this aspect of Bantu folklore must be - and seemingly respected by others too.

Speaking for myself, I wouldn't leap a foot in the air in surprise if our old friend *Australopithecus* turned out to be at the bottom of it all...

Regarding "Lakeland BHM" (p.8) - forget it! In the highly unlikely event of your being taken in by it, the convincing sounding buildup, such as precise location, time, weather conditions and the like as this is easily done by any hoaxer in a few minutes if they are reasonably able with pen or typewriter.

I happen to know the area mentioned, and as the creature so carefully described is highly unlikely to be a result of the pure and immaculate conception, it's at least reasonable to suppose there are others of its large, conspicuous and singular-looking species shambling about there too. I don't think - as we used to say at school.

The only kind of person who would send dangerous muck of this sort to a newspaper is a) one sorely in need of psychiatric treatment (although as an ultra-reactionary I've not the slightest faith in it), or b) a pathological liar - which is more likely to be the case.

EDITORIAL NOTE:

I would agree with Clin that it is so highly unlikely as to be almost impossible that there is any FLESH AND BLOOD explanation for BHM sightings anywhere in the United Kingdom.

These 'creatures' have been reported, however, for centuries and there must be some explanation for them. See the forthcoming paper by myself and Richard Freeman in *Fortean Studies Volume Five*.

Sorry, all noble and overworked members of the editorial staff, but interesting as they are I fail utterly to see how such articles as "But is It Art?" (pp.10), "Who's Afraid Of the Big Bad.." (p.11), "Eastern Cougars" (pp.14-17) and all too many others, contrive to find their way into a publication specifically devoted to the study of cryptozoology. Perhaps some kind will take pity on me and explain matters.

EDITORIAL NOTE : essentially, whilst A&M is predominantly a magazine about Cryptozoology, it has always covered other aspects of the forteen universe whether because of their scientific interest or merely because they make me (and the gang) laugh.

I couldn't agree more with Graham Inglis that the new millenium (don't know about you, but I'm already sick of the sight and sound of that word) should really begin in 2001 - although I suppose the devotees of 2000 will argue that this would make the year neither one thing or the other... In short, the root of the trouble, or argument if you like, is the result of a monk named Dionysius Exiguus (Little Dionysius, Dionysius the Titch, Dionysius the Vertically Challenged) contriving to get hold of the wrong end of the stick back in the Sixth Century - but it's too long a story to attempt to go into here. Think yourselves lucky I've told you at least a bit of it!

Concerning the illustration of the Cat (ahem) on p.30 - offhand I'd suggest it's a Genet, which of course is one of the Viverrines. Interestingly, these were-once kept to kill small rodents, like Cats (no - don't try to be funny, you know perfectly well what I mean), in various Mediterranean countries.

Regarding "Kent" coming from the Celtic word for "head" (pp.35-36), the word is Caille (variously Caille, Caille, Caille) and the origin of the Scots/Northumbrian "canny", meaning bright or perceptive or intelligent - literally "heady". "Kent" means "Land of the Caille" - a tribe of Celtic origin who may have been better endowed upstairs than most of the surrounding folk - or perhaps they weren't, with the appellation being bestowed ironically!

Ye ken (same root?), reading "A&M" does put the most esoteric information in the seeker after knowledge's way. you must agree...

On the same page Mr. Entertainment's cartoon forces me to the irreverent conclusion that he is badly in need of a few very simple lessons in elementary zoology - Camels are among the comparatively few mammals quite unable to swim.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Apologies all round are needed here. I am sure that Aberdeen's Mr Entertainment is perfectly aware that Camels can't swim; however, it wasn't him who drew the picture! I credited it to him by mistake, and it was actually by Dr Lars Thomas who meant it as an ironic illustration for his article about Moose in Lake Storjson a few issues ago...

"p.37 - and the paragraph about the Moon landing, back in 1969 when, you'll recall, the Americans just had to get there before the Russians did. I often wonder whether I'm the only person in the country who, from the word "go", has felt strongly that there isn't a scrap, shred, morsel or atom of proof - convincing as all the carefully set up "evidence" might be that Men has ever landed on the thing, or indeed got anywhere near it. I know I've upset more than one American on this issue, but "to thine own self be true". I once asked a colleague why he thought I might be the only doubter, when I'd have thought there 'd have been many, to which he replied *"There you go, sounding your mouth off again: there are plenty of doubters, but most have the sense to keep that thing between the nose and the chin shut."*

The editorial team of this magazine have done their best to ensure a smooth transition period to our new layout and format. However, there have been a few teething problems, and a few regular features, such as "Now that's what I call Crypto" and Mark North's cartoon are not in this issue. Be assured that they will be back as soon as possible.

In the meantime, it's 11 pm at night, we're still working, still drinking white wine, and still listening to *The Clash*.

I am reminded of what my headmaster wrote on my school leaving report: "*Must learn not to say what he thinks*", while the form-master prophesised:

"One day this boy's tongue or pen or fists - or a combination thereof - will get him into very serious trouble".

which might surprise you....

I was interested to note the mention of the "Monster of Glamis" in the book reviews on p.4 as I've long been interested in this intriguing mystery. Forget the hairy egg shape; there's usually little or no smoke without fire and I've small doubt there's at least a sub-stratum of fact here. Particularly noteworthy is the "nearly limbless" bit, as this almost exactly describes the condition known as "phocomelia" (yes, it is from the same root as the generic name for certain seals) in which the rudimentary limbs (as per the Thalidomide cases) resemble flippers. It's said the "monster" lived to a great age, dying as comparatively recently as 1920 but most irritatingly I cannot find out who made this assertion, or gave the description. Surely some-one knows - or how did they get the information in the first place? In all seriousness, I feel this is interesting and important enough to justify an official commission to look properly into the matter - just as I do about the astounding, and seemingly authenticated, reports of "Spring Heeled Jack" during the last century. Regarding the "monster" I have a half-formed notion at the back of my mind that the Custodian of the Royal Archives at Windsor could shed some light on the matter - if he (or she in these crackpot days) had a mind or the permission to!

EDITOR'S NOTE (From our Files): Glamis Castle in Angus, which apart from being the ancestral home of the Queen Mother is also the site for one of Scotland's best known mystery humanoids; the monster of Glamis Castle. He is supposed to have been the hideously deformed heir to the Bowes-Lyon family who was, according to popular rumour, born in about 1800, and died as recently as 1921. He is supposed to look like 'an enormous flabby egg', having no neck and only minute arms and legs. His physical shortcomings are made up for by

his immense physical strength, and according to some accounts his propensity for evil. There is a family 'secret' concerning the monster, which is only told to the male heir of the Bowes-Lyon family when they attain majority. According to Peter Underwood, however: "*The present Lord Strathmore knows nothing about the monster, presumably because the creature was dead when he reached his majority, but he always felt that there was a corpse or coffin bricked up behind the walls*".

What's AFOOT

THE ANIMALS & MEN "WHERE WE WENT AND WHAT WE DID" COLUMN
EDITED AND COMPILED BY RICHARD FREEMAN



MYTHS AND MONSTERS: The Natural History Museum, London. 5th April 13th September, 1998.

After a cracking weekend at the Fortean Times Unconvention (described below by Nigel Wright), a

visit to this exhibition was in order. The backbone of the exhibition is formed by six large anamnetronic monsters, built by the Japanese company, Kokoro, who are responsible for many dinosaur exhibitions around the world.

The first one is the jewel in the crown a real showpiece. A 23 foot long green dragon with red wings stirs from its slumber, opening baleful red eyes at the visitor. The regally horned head, with its giant fangs has obviously been modelled on those at carnivorous dinosaurs. This is the finest model in the show; apart from its modest size, one could easily believe this was a real fire-drake!! The accompanying text, however, falls far short of this magnificent mechanical reptile. The Museum play it ultra-safe and attempt to explain away dragons with such old chestnuts as monitor lizards, snakes, crocodilians and dinosaur bones. At the risk of being accused at narcissism, I would direct readers to my own article on dragons, (in issue 14 of 'Animals and Men') for a more in depth look at these most ancient of monsters.

Sadly, the quality of the other models do not even approach this dragon. For some odd reason, the visitor is compelled to view them through backlit muslin veils. Is this perhaps meant to make them look more mysterious? Why are the models displayed in this way? All that this achieves is to make looking at the models more difficult and extremely frustrating. The other creatures are a unicorn (narwhal and oryx are given as an explanation), cyclops (mastodon skulls), chimera (lion, serpent and goat haunted volcano!!), yeti (options kept open; Gigantopithecus, perhaps?), and an alien that looks like a cross between a Grey and a lizard man.

Apart from the dragon, the yeti stands out. It is 11 feet tall and is reconstructed as a giant bipedal, ground-dwelling orang-utan; which is what most people believe Gigantopithecus to be. Crunching on bamboo stalks, it makes a lifelike impression. Mermaids, kraken, lake and sea monsters are all tackled briefly and inadequately in the text. A small shop is situated close to the exit; which sells excellent bigfoot models. It costs over £6 to get into the museum, but as well as the "Myths and Monsters" exhibition, the crypto-twitcher will find a whole host of other delights. Britain's largest collection of dinosaurs is housed here; the sharp-eyed can also find a giant squid, ground sloths and a thylacine.

Far less fun is to be had in Bradford; where Cartwright Hall plays host to "The Unexplained, Part 2", a continuation of the exhibition at the National Museum of Film & Photography. Part 2 is by far inferior to part 1 (which was reviewed in the last issue). All this "exhibition" consists of is one room of photographs - all of which (bar one), I had seen before. They included unconvincing ectoplasm oozing from the mouths of mediums, a levitation (obviously someone jumping from a chair), the Cottingley Fairies, and some equally unconvincing fuzzy blobs also purporting to be pictures of fairfolk. In short, it was deeply and most profoundly crap! But what of the one new photo? (Well, new to me). This was taken in 1995, at Traitor's Gate in the Tower of London (Editor's Note - See the back cover of *Rum, Sodomy and the Lash* by The Pogues). It shows a black-sleeved hand, encased in a black glove, with a frilly, white cuff; which the photographer did not notice at the time. Rather than snapping a ghostly hand, I think that the person in question had been standing next to a Goth. Now did I visit Traitor's Gate in 1995?



A VIRGIN CONFERENCE-GOER BREAKS HIS DUCK!

*a special report on the start of the
conference season*

by Nigel Wright

In thirty years of ufo interest, I had never attended a conference. This was the case until three weeks ago, when, much to my surprise and delight, Jon and Graham asked me to help out on our group stall, at the Dorchester UFO conference. And so it was, that on a rather dull and rainy day, I found myself sat in a crowded estate car, sharing the back seat with John's dog, Toby. (Thanks Toby; I'm still trying to get rid of the hairs!) On arriving at the venue, the corn exchange building, we spent the first half hour or so getting the stock for the stall out of the car, and setting the table up. The crew read the running order of lectures for the day, and picked out the ones each member wanted to listen to. A rota was then worked out, so that each person could hear what they wanted to.

The vast majority of stock that we were selling was cryptozoological in nature, and I must admit that I felt a bit of a fraud as I stood behind then stall, as the members of the public began to file in to the hallway, and took interest in our wares! As I prayed that no-one would ask me to complicated a question on the animal front, I was relieved when a young man asked me what my ideas were on the Roswell case. "I'm on my OWN ground!" was the first thing that went on in my mind!

And so, I found myself debating the finer points of this case, for twenty minutes or so, until Jon said I could go and look around the other stalls. During my wanderings I managed to have a very interesting talk with the writer Terry Walters. He struck me as a very sincere man, who really believes in his story. After this, I went on to have a talk with the English editor of "Nexus" magazine, Marcus Allen. It was then time for lunch, and, during this, I managed to glimpse the unmistakable form of Graham Birdsall, the founder and editor of "UFO magazine".

Chancing my luck, I stepped forward, and introduced myself. He turned out to be a very pleasant man, and we talked about the wave of ufo activity over Exmouth, last year. Mr. Birdsall talked with me for about half an hour, then it was on with the business of selling wares from our stall.

Later on that day I managed to catch Mr. Birdsall's lecture, it contained some very interesting footage from Mexico which I found most convincing. The rest of the convention was spent selling goods on our stall and meeting various people from the UFO world. eventually, at about six p.m., we packed up and headed home for a well earned cup of tea...

The following Friday, and I was off again, this time to London for the annual UnConvention of the Fortean Times. This year it was held at the university of London, right in the centre of town.

We arrived at the venue late that night, and spent some two hours or so unloading stock and setting up our stall. It was then a trip out to the home of Emmmet Sweeney, at Romford. He very kindly put us up for the two nights of the convention. Next morning, seven a. m., and we were off, across London to the venue. The doors opened at ten a.m., and the crowds rushed in. I have never seen so many people at one meeting!. So we had a very busy morning on the stall, and I was then off on my, by now usual, hunt for well-known faces.

Amongst my hunting trophies for that morning was a brief chat with Nick Pope. He struck me as a very strange man. Small in stature, he was surrounded by hangers-on, and thus was very hard to get to talk to properly. This was a great shame, because I particularly wanted to ask him a few questions about how a man who was still working for the government, could possibly be allowed to publish a book full of information from a highly placed government department, such as A52!! Still, never mind: there is always next time! On day two, I managed to talk to Rev. Lionel Fanthorpe, of *Fortean T.V.* fame. He was a charming man, who's real life charm is every bit as nice as he appears on T.V.!

After our lunch, it was the turn of Colonel Blashford-Snell to be hooked by my one-man hunting expedition! He was very polite and listened

to my points with great patience, before he had to go on with his book signing! The convention ended that night with a great party in the S.U. bar: here, our beloved leader Jon Downes really stood out as the fantastic party animal we all, who know him well, know him to be! I will not embarrass Jon with the details of his antics that night here - suffice to say that we who were there will never forget his glorious rendering of certain folk songs! Nice one Jon!

Weekend three, and this time the venue was to be Southend! At the magnificent hall, we went about the usual business of setting up the stall in the main approach to the lecturing centre. For me, the main coup of this particular weekend was that we shared our digs with Nick Redfern, the author of "*A Covert Agenda*". Nick turned out to be a really great guy, and I'm glad to say that he and I have become mates since! He and I had several chats about the sightings over Exeter and Exmouth, in the 1950s, and he has promised to keep me informed of any papers that might pertain to these cases, that he finds. The other main event of the weekend was the first showing of new UFO footage from Lowestoft, filmed the end of last year. Now this film is really good - as good, in my personal assessment, as any from Mexico or Florida!

Then of the weekend: it was Jon and Graham's turn to speak. What followed can only be described as a truly enlightening experience! For a start, someone, I leave to your imagination to guess who, forgot to load the slides into the projector! Then both Jon and Graham took it in turns to explain the events of that memorable trip. At the end, they received a standing ovation, and then John performed a fantastic duet with the Rev. Lionel Fanthorpe. What a sight.

So, there you have it. My first convention experience! Was it "good for me?", as the saying goes? Well, yes, it was: it really gave me the chance to hear and speak to so many of the main people in this business today. And, to be honest with you, it's hard work, but fantastic fun. Thanks Jon and Graham, and here's to the next!

P.S. Rule number One for all convention goers: never pack a Cortina estate with four or five hundredweight of stock - it handles like a pig!



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor and his band of merry men welcome an exchange of correspondence on any subject of interest to readers of this magazine. We reserve the right to edit letters and would like to stress that opinions voiced are those of the individual correspondent rather than being necessarily those of the editorial team or the Centre for Fortean Zoology. Every attempt is made not to infringe anyone's moral rights or copyright, and we apologise if we have unwittingly done so.

LAND WHERE THERE IS NO LAND.....

Dear Jonathan

While I was on holiday in Salzburg in May I had the chance to finally read both "The Owlman & Others" and "The CFZ Yearbook 1998" (well, the weather wasn't that good), and I have a few

comments on the first and possibly a major issue arising from the second.

I should start by saying that I am a voracious reader with an encyclopaedic memory. This means that I can remember quotations and references with ease. I spotted one reference fairly quickly in *The Owlman*: on pages 211-212, you refer to Oscar Wilde devising a story about Jesus surviving the crucifixion and place this after his release from prison. I don't know if Eliman thus specifically dates the story, but if he does he is wrong. I read some years ago in one of Yeats's autobiographical pieces - I don't remember which one, but it was in the paperback selection of his prose published by Macmillan in the 60's - his account of visiting Wilde and finding a missionary consulting him on the colour of baptismal frocks; and when the missionary had gone Wilde said to Yeats, "I have been inventing a Christian heresy," and told him the story which you quote. This belongs to the days of Wilde's respectability, before he went to prison. (Wilde had a wonderful attitude to religion.

The story is that at Oxford, as part of his oral exam in Old Testament Greek, he had to translate the story of Christ's passion, and on being told to stop, replied, "please let me go on. I want to see how it finishes.")

The other thing I would say in respect of *The Owlman* is that at one point you commit, in my view, a literary libel. Your description of Daniel Mannix's *Those About to Die* (page 211) does not tally with my memory of the book - and I too read it in my early teens.

Mannix was exceptionally knowledgeable about the performing arts and wrote, in my view, an entertaining but solid account of the world of the Roman arena - a nastier place than modern circuses, but hardly recognisable from your description. Perhaps your Latin teacher was embellishing the text?

EDITOR'S NOTE: I would like to defend myself here, not as the Editor of this magazine but as the author of "The Owlman and Others". The passage to which Martin refers reads:

"When I was a first or second year pupil at grammar school in North Devon during the early 1970s, I went through a traumatic experience. I was in Latin class; and, for reasons best known to himself, the Latin teacher used to finish off every lesson by reading excerpts from a particularly gruesome book about the Roman arenas. He seemed, or so it appeared to me as an impressionable and admittedly rather immature twelve-year-old, that he took a salacious and almost perverted delight in reading descriptions of public crucifixions, burnings, disembowelments, dismemberments and ritual torture both of humans and animals to a class of about twenty small boys. I don't know what effect these stories had on the rest of the class, but they completely traumatised me, to such an extent that I feel very disturbed and upset even writing about it now, a quarter of a century later."

I started to investigate Phoenician mythology and found that there were links, many of them, to the subjects discussed in this book. They worshipped a corn deity, and more significantly sacrificed both animals and small children in horrific ways. I decided to dig deeper into the available literature on the subject, but found myself confronted with more and more graphic descriptions of ritual tortures, burnings and dismemberments on an enormous scale.~~ My dreams, which had been relatively unfettered by visions of Owmen, wizards and naked witches, became populated with ghastly visions of tortured children and I decided that here was where my research should end....."

My libel was perpetrated against my Latin teacher of a quarter of a century ago. I found the whole experience severely traumatic and indeed it is one which I still find difficult to write about. There is no doubt that Mannix wrote a well researched book, and I would not attempt to dispute it. However I did try to re-read it in recent years but still found it highly disturbing.

Anyway, getting to my real interest: the article on pages 35 to 47 of *The CFZ Yearbook* - I don't know where it comes from, but if you find out, please

please, please, please let me know); but I am fascinated by two sentences on page 38 which refer to:

"...the "great white whale" of the Greenland coasts, hunted for two centuries by the Scotch whalers, which they called Moby Dick, and regarded as the terror of the Arctic Sea. According to these mariners, it makes its appearance now at intervals; but is of so venerable an age that its body is completely covered by vegetation, algae, and marine mosses, in whose midst live attached to it, as to a rock, multitudes of shell-fish and polypi".

Now, by a fortan coincidence, while waiting at the Eurostar terminal to catch my train on the journey to Salzburg, I decided to buy some extra reading matter, and what book did I buy? None other than *Moby Dick*!

When I read that passage in the *Yearbook*, my first thought was that the author had lifted the legend from Melville.

Chronologically, it's feasible: *Moby Dick* was published in 1851, and the article is certainly later because it cites a publication of 1857-58 in the footnote on page 3.

However, there are two reasons to doubt that the author was simply cribbing from Melville:

- He (I guess in the mid-19th century it would be a he) specifically attributes this whale to the Arctic Seas; Melville's was a Pacific whale (and a sperm whale to boot; Arctic whales were right whales).

- All the detail about the whale being covered in algae, etc, does not appear in Melville (though, if I recall correctly, some of it does in the John Huston film, which was scripted by Ray Bradbury).

I re-read *Moby Dick* on the journey back from Salzburg and confirmed that this was not a straightforward crib; and once back in London I consulted Harold Beaver's 1972 Penguin edition of *Moby Dick* and here things started to get really murky.

Beaver prints four sources for the *Moby Dick* story. One is Chase's narrative of how a sperm whale (non-

white) rammed and sank the whaler *Essex* in 1820; the other three concern white whales. All three are sperm whales. More to the point, none is a first-hand story.

The white whale stories are, in chronological order:

- In his journal for February 19th 1834 Ralph Waldo Emerson (we're talking serious gossip here) records being told by a seaman of "an old sperm whale which he called a white whale" (interesting turn of phrase) "which was known for many years by the whalemen as Old Tom". This whale's speciality was crushing the boats which attacked him; "and he was finally taken somewhere off Payta Head by the Winslow or the Essex" (the *Essex* which, you will recall was sunk by a whale in 1820).

- In 1837 Jules Lecomte published an account of a white sperm whale which was killed after a career of notoriety in 1828 by an unidentified Nantucket whaler. The story is that the captain of the *Oceania* offered his daughter in marriage to the harpooner who killed the whale; the harpooner in question turned out to be "a tall Negro" (but got the girl anyway). The whale was killed near the Falkland Islands.

- In 1839 J.N. Reynolds published *Mocha Dick or the White Whale of the Pacific*. This purports to be an account of an interview with the crew of the whaler *Penguin* at Mocha Island, which is situated "upon the coast of Chili, in lat. 38.28 south, twenty leagues north of Mono del Bonifacio, and opposite the Imperial river, from which it bears w. s. w."

Very precise; but I can find none of those names in my (admittedly not very large-scale) world atlas. Accordingly to this account, Mocha Dick had haunted the island of Mocha since before 1810 (sperm whales, we now know, are very migratory). "On the spermaceti whale, barnacles are rarely discovered; but upon the head of this *lusus naturae*, they had clustered, until it became absolutely rugged with shells". This version of the story had the *Penguin* kill Mocha Dick in the late 1830's.

- That story was published in *The Knickerbocker Magazine* in 1839; but in 1892 an article described the exploits of Mocha Dick from July 1840 to October 1842. Moreover, in 1846

Knickerbocker Magazine published another article on Mocha Dick which described him as "a huge mountain-whale, that rises like an island every now and then from the bosom of the Pacific, trailing from his sides hundreds of slimy green ropes, that stream like "horrid hair" upon the waters".

So, what have we got? In chronological order, we have:

- the whaler *Essex* sunk by a non-white sperm whale in 1820 (as told by Owen Chase, who was on the ship at the time)
- a white sperm whale named Old Tom killed by the *Winslow* or the *Essex* some time before 1834 (as told to Emerson)
- an anonymous white sperm whale killed by a tall negro from Nantucket in 1828 (as told by Jules Lecomte, who was not there)
- a white sperm whale named Mocha Dick killed in the late 1830's by the anonymous mate of the *Penguin* (as told to J.N. Reynolds, who was not there and may not have been anywhere else)
- Mocha Dick surviving and wreaking havoc into the 1840's
- Hermann Melville's *Moby Dick* in 1851
- a whale (presumably a right whale) named Moby Dick who had, sometime after 1857-58, been around in the Arctic Seas for two hundred years or more (as recorded by anonymous, who got it from the Scotch whalers).

Put all these stories together, and you have a whale which is:

- definitely white
- almost certainly very old
- impossible to kill (reports of its death being consistently exaggerated)
- a sperm whale, except when it's a right whale
- found wherever there are whalers
- never actually reported by someone who has seen it.

What conclusion do I draw?

Well, on this limited evidence I am hesitant to reach a conclusion; but it looks to me as if the white whale is a nineteenth century whalers' foaf-tale.

Everybody's heard of it; no-one's ever seen it; and the harpooneer who's killed is always anonymous. If I am right, Herman Melville may have created the only major work of literature to be based on a foaf-tale. I probably need to do more research on this. The wisdom of doing so is questionable. As everybody knows, you never catch Moby Dick and look what happened to Captain Ahab. But never mind: having gone this far, I cannot not go further.

Call me Ishmael.

Martin F. Jenkins
London,

EDITOR'S NOTE: More discussion on this topic is welcomed. On the subject of semi-legendary cetacea does anyone have any knowledge of a famous dolphin called "Pelorus Jack" which once lived (I believe) near New Zealand?

Also, whilst on the subject of weird whales, Joan Aiken's excellent children's novel "*Night Birds on Nantucket*" features a PINK Sperm whale called "Rosy"....

FAIRY, MOTH OR WHATEVER

Dear Jon,

The individual who sent this to me is from Tennessee. Perhaps one of you entomology enthusiasts can provide an i.d.

"The insect that I saw was humming a song. I was on top of a hill and thought that I was hearing a radio or something like that but I noticed this little bug. The closer it got the more like a song it became. This little bug was flying upright like a ...fairy!

I was really excited because I thought what I saw was what people perhaps in earlier times might have mistaken for real sprites. This bug went from tree to tree and from flower to flower, stopping at each one.

I didn't see it eat anything - but, like I said, I was excited. It was about 2" tall and had blue eyes [which were] large almond shaped, and long antennae that hung like hair. It was really quite intriguing but as I moved to get a better look, it saw me and went

horizontal and was off like a shot. also the humming stopped when it saw me and it just buzzed away.....

Adios. Chad Arment

it was a newspaper hoax, maybe to counter the Sea Serpent report by another newspaper

Brad LaGrange

INDIANA 'GATORS AND A WHALE

Thought I'd publish an account of some alligators, then the whale.

"Indianapolis Star, Dec 31, 1946" "Petersburg Lays Claim to Gator Killed Downstate"

Petersburg, Ind. Dec 30 - An alligator liberated in a government lake near here in 1900 is believed to be the one killed in Mariah Creek in Vincennes last week by two Pike County hunters, Ben Melvin and James Audear. It was recalled that a defunct road show in 1900 gave an alligator to John Eisert, an employe of the Petersburg Press, in payment for an advertising bill. Unable to sell the alligator, Eisert placed it in the lake where it remained until 1913 floodwaters carried down White River to the Wabash. There it apparently worked its way up the Wabash and into Mariah Creek.

I think more than one 'gator is involved here

From an unnamed paper, same reigon (Knox County) paraphrased by my source

A alligator was said to be "cavorting" on Henery Deckers farm, in Decker township. (Note: There area is most likely the town of Decker, known as Deckers Chapple to some, and had several sasquatch sightings in late 70's, early 80's). Another farmer (Matthais Pickle) said the animal let a deep bass to the chorus of frogs.

It is unclear how familiar an Indiana farmer would have been with the groans of 'gators.

Whele time. This might be from Mt. Carmel, but it was listed with Knox County Folklore, no reference given. A possible clue was that the paper listed as the source was the "Western Sun". The 15 foot whale was seen in "Mauks Pond", which is possibly a medium sized lake. Could this whale be an Alligator? I think

BOOK REVIEWS

The Owlman & Others

by Jonathan Downes.

(See back cover of this magazine for publisher and availability)

Guest reviewer Nick Redfern (author of *A Covert Agenda* and *The FBI Files*):

Although my profession is that of an author of books on the *somewhat* emotive subject of UFOs, only on seldom occasions have I ever reviewed a published work written by those with similar (or at least tangentially-connected) interests. In early 1998, however, a fascinating book caught my attention and prompted me to write my first book review in approximately a decade. Although my written output is indeed largely limited to the UFO controversy, I have a keen interest in an associated (or is it?) mystery - cryptozoology, and from an early age devoured the work of people such as Heuvelmans and Dinsdale. One of my all time favourite books, however, was John Keel's *'The Mothman Prophecies.'* A dark and disturbing book, in which Keel chronicled the startling accounts of a number of people across the USA who had come into contact with a fearsome-looking beast dubbed 'Mothman' - primarily due to the fact that it appeared humanoid in shape; albeit with a pair of powerful-looking wings!

Coming across like a modern-day gargoyle, Mothman induced thoughts of horror and fascination in me when I read the book back in 1975 - at a mere ten years of

age! Indeed, I recall with fondness being castigated by one of my junior school teachers for reading such material when I should presumably have been following the exploits of the Secret Seven or the Famous Five! But now to the crux of the matter... Whilst Keel's book largely (although not entirely) dealt with sightings of Mothman within the confines of the USA, a very similar winged entity has been seen on a variety of occasions in the United Kingdom! That entity has become known in legend as 'Owlman'.

Indeed, references to Owlman have been reported in cryptozoological papers and manuscripts for a number of years; what was needed, however, was an in-depth, analytical look at the entire controversy. In 1998, that came to pass... I had for a number of years been aware of the work and written output of Jonathan Downes, and was delighted when in late 1997 Jon interviewed me for what was to be a first-class piece of work for 'Sightings' magazine in support of my book, *'A Covert Agenda'*.

In speaking with Jon, it transpired that we had many things in common (and most of them seemed to centre around wine, women and song!) and we thereafter became friends, liaising from time to time on matters of mutual interest. I was therefore most pleased when, in May 1998, I got to meet Jon in person when we both spoke before an audience at the Southend UFO Group's conference. The conference was a resounding success, and I was delighted to obtain a copy of Jon's then recently-released book, *'The Owlman And Others.'*

I intended to sit down and read the book over the course of a few days; however, after having read the first couple of chapters, I found myself absorbed by its contents, and finished the book in one sitting.

But what does the book tell us? Quite simply, Jon presents us with a remarkable account of a series of incredible events which occurred in Cornwall in the blistering summer of 1976 (a year which, for me, was filled with scrumping, scrapping and thoughts of a certain girl in my class at school); events which centred around a series of sightings of the aforementioned Owlman.

As Jon details with excellent clarity (not to mention a keen wit and fine story-weaving ability) the sightings of the elusive beast were nerve-wracking and awe-inspiring, to say the least. The book is filled with accounts of this particular winged phantom and its (his?) exploits in deepest and darkest Cornwall.

Whatever, Owlman was and still may be, Jon demolishes the notion that it was simply due to the misidentification of an everyday creature (such as an indigenous species of owl), and presents evidence of the presence in our midst of a truly creepy and darkly-evil creature which seems to take an inordinate amount of pleasure in scaring the living shit out of people whilst perching above them in trees like the godforsaken offspring between the devil himself and some mutated vulture!

To his credit, Jon works diligently to address the issue of whether or not the entire controversy was due to misperception and/or hoax; however, it is clear from Jon's exceptionally detailed investigations that such conclusions collapse upon carefully study. Moreover, Jon reveals that the sightings of Owlman only told part of the story: the book goes on to detail the many other bizarre events which were unfolding at the time in precisely the same vicinity, namely the sightings of sea monsters off the Cornish coast; the unusual activity of domestic and wild animals; and, most disturbing of all, the killing and mutilating of a number of animals under highly unusual circumstances.

In reading this particular aspect of Jon's book, I was fascinated to see that he had uncovered, a copious amount of data which had long been overlooked by previous investigators and which suggested that matters of both a serious and horrific nature were occurring throughout the Devon-Cornwall area in the late 1970's.

Certainly, sightings of man-like winged-entities; strange, sea beasts; shocking animal mutilations; and remote areas of darkest Cornwall, all sound like the perfect ingredients for some long-gone 'Hammer' film; however, *'The Owlman And Others'* cannot be relegated to the realm of fiction.

It would be unfair of me to reveal Jon's conclusions on the entire affair; however, I found myself agreeing with his assertions and would implore anyone with even the remotest interest in reports of mystery beasts

roaming the wilds of Britain to secure a copy of Jon's book at the earliest opportunity. A must buy! And if you ever hear above you the beating of strange and powerful wings, tell Jon. He may put you in his next book!

RICHARD'S NOTE: "HE LIKES OWLMAN, HE LIKES MORGAWR, HE LIKES WITCHES, HE LIKES SHIELDS"

Plants and Animals of The Gambia
by A.Barber and C.Moiser
(Plymouth College of Further Education)

An interesting little booklet for the travelling botanist or zoologist wishing more knowledge of the flora and fauna of this tiny West African country. Notes on all the major species and habitats to be found in The Gambia. This booklet (co-authored by our very own Chris Moiser) was originally produced to accompany the annual field trips to West Africa conducted by Chris and his colleagues at Plymouth College. One unfortunate omission - no mention of Gambo (snigger). RICHARD F.

The Celtic Way - a long distance walk through Western Britain
by Val Saunders Evans (Sigma Leisure)

Sigma leisure have produced a number of these invaluable little guide books but this one, with its slightly new-age and neo-pagan slant is really to be recommended to students of folklore and weirdness along the Celtic Fringe. It not only tells you how to get to some of the most beautiful parts of the United Kingdom but also details some of the more obscure pieces of folklore (including much of interest to the Cryptozoologist and fortaen)

An excellent little book and one which for only £9.99 we can recommend reasonably highly. JOND.

WEB SITES

by GRAHAM INGLIS

The Internet is a dynamic (or even chaotic) entity: people can change servers and web addresses can be, as they say, subject to alteration.

Got a site that should be listed here? - tell us about it!

Our site -The CFZ - website address is
<http://www.eclipse.co.uk/cfz>
and now includes a news service and an embryonic picture gallery.

The English version of Michel Raynal's
Virtual Institute of Cryptozoology service at
<http://perso.wanadoo.fr/cryptozoo/welcome.htm>
is now being developed - with text and pics

The news section on the Earthly Delights site at
<http://www.planet13.co.uk/earthly/EarthlyDelights.htm>
looks at Bodmin Moor: its terrestrial zodiac, big cats and celtic stones

Brian Goodwin's site at
<http://freespace.virgin.net/brian.goodwin/index.htm>
covers big cats, serpents, dragons, Nessie, and news from Fortean Cumbria

Ben Roesch's site is at
<http://www.ncf.carleton.ca/~bz050/>

Chas' Loch Ness site is at
<http://website.lineone.net/~chas.sweeney/ness.htm>

and includes an opportunity to get "Loch Ness in a bottle" - not the whole loch, however... only some of it.

PERIODICAL REVIEWS

by GRAHAM INGLIS

We welcome an exchange of publications with magazines swimming in the same ball-park as our good selves...

Dead of Night

Lee Walker, 156 Bolton Road East, New Ferry, Merseyside, L62 4RY. A4 60pp £2

"Animals & Men" is a magazine of *fortean* zoology, rather than the narrower field of *cryptozoology*. "Dead of Night" covers *fortean* matters right across the board, such as ghost stories, conspiracy theories, strange news, UFOs, and religious / ritualistic / cultist / bizarre behaviour. And *fortean* zoology of course.

Merseyside's "only publication dealing with all paranormal phenomena" is a very entertaining and substantial read.

Mainly About Animals

13 Pound Place, Shalford, Guildford, Surrey, GU4 8HH. A5. 4 per year costs £5 in UK.

Clinton Keeling is never shy of expressing a strong opinion and this magazine has the gravitas one might expect when edited by the sort of man who'd probably abhor the mixed metaphor near the top of this page.

How do gulls decide to spend their day? Why do so many domestic dogs walk "off-square"? The July issue delves into these matters, and also includes pieces on the Bali tiger, tree monitor lizards, and zoological news.

Parascience

Domra, 65 Constable Rd, Corby, Northants, NN18 0RT. £2.50 A5. 42pp. Issue 1 - Autumn 1998.

Articles from the fringes of science. Issue 1's subjects include thoughtforms ("psychodemiurgics"!), dowsing, Velikovsky's Comet, mystery animals in south-west England, and the much-maligned (or sometimes just cribbed) work of Nikola Tesla who researched unconventional means of propagating energy through the atmosphere. A good and very interesting read.

Animal News

NAPAK, 57 Marlboro Ave, Goole, E. Yorks, DN14 6JB. A5 magazine: 22pp.

NAPAK aims to present a united and informed front to prevent unreasonably restrictive "anti-keeping" legislation, and to educate the public in animal keeping.

Cryptozoologia

Belge Protection des Animaux, Sq de Latins, 49/4 B-1050 Bruxelles, Belgium. A4 16pp

French mag with a contribution team including Michel Raynal, Francois de Sarre and Dr Lara Palmeros.

Herp Life

Karen Tucker, 14 Shrubbery Close, Bamstaple, Devon, EX32 9DG. 4-Sided (2pp) newsletter of the South-Western Herpetological Soc., England.

Bigfoot Record

Bigfoot Research Center, Apt F, 21 Benham St., Bristol, CT 06010, USA.

A wealth of sightings, book reviews and information on the Sasquatch / Bigfoot entity, including reproductions of newspaper articles. The supposed photographs of the thing don't exactly carry conviction, however, due to degradation in the copying process.

ANIMALS & MEN

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- 6 The Owlman Special; also the Humped Elephants of Nepal, Mystery Cats, Sabre-toothed cats, Mysterious hominids of Africa, The British Nandi Bear?, Bibliography of Cryptozoology books part 1 (by Dr Karl Shuker).
- 7 Mystery Whales, Strangeness in Scotland, On collecting a cryptid, Bodmin Leopard Skull, Shuker's Cryptozoological Bibliography pt 2.
- 8 Green Cats and Dogs, Mystery Whales, Quagga Project, Bibliography of Cryptozoological books (3rd & concluding part), Malayan Man Beast.
- 9 Hong Kong Tiger, Horseman of Lincolnshire, Scottish BHM, Congo Peacock, Mystery Whales.
- 10 Mystery Moth of Madagascar, Bengal Leopard Cats, The Derry, Wild Boars in Kent, a new Irish lake monster, mystery whales and the truth about the Essex Beach Corpses.
- 11 The "Walruses Special", also: Feathered Dinosaurs, Ground Sloth Survival in North America, Mystery Whales, Initial Bipedalism.
- 12 Lions: The Barbary Lion, etc. More Feathered Dinosaurs, Chinese Crabs in the Thames, Mystery Animals of Germany, News from New Zealand.

13 Pangolins; also Moby the Sperm Whale, Barking Beast of Bath, Yorkshire ABCs, Molly the Singing Oyster, Leatherback Turtles, Walruses.

14 The Dragons of Yorkshire, Irish mystery animals, In Search Of "Gambo", Charlie Fort and the Vampire Sheep Slayer - and Jackals; and the first of Clinton's Cogitations (Clim Keeling looks back on and comments on the previous issue).

15 Lake Dakataua "Migo" monster update, The Weird Warbling Whatsit of the Westcountry, The Beast of Llangurig, The Waspman, The Bigfoot "Murders", and three articles on Beavers.

16 Expedition Report: The Search for the Chupacabra; Quagga Project update; Bestiary #1 (by Ade Dimmick); Snakes with Legs; Eastern Cougars; Giant Lizards in the English Countryside? (Darren Naish)

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4 St Neot: Weirdest Village in the West? Naked witches, hellhounds and Capel's tomb. The Vampire of St Leonards (Exeter). Cattle Mutilation. Psychic Detectives.

5 Crop Circles & Animal Mutilations. Ghosts of Glamis Castle. Communication with UFOs., The "noosphere" / text semantics.

6 Jon and Tina are shown the Rendlesham UFO crash site in Suffolk. Mystery Planets (Karl Shuker). Cannibalism in Scotland. Create your own country.

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